





Is God or Satan Winning?

DO YOU KNOW: That God created Lucifer perfect, but he rebelled against God (Isa. 14: 12-20; Ezek. 28: 12-19), and so became Satan (*adversary*), God's enemy?

+ That Satan is a *person*—not an *evil principle*—for he abode not in the truth, spoke to God, reasoned, *etc.* (John 8: 44; Job 1: 1-22; 2: 1-13; 2 Cor. 2: 11; 11: 14, 15)?

+ That God created Adam perfect and told him if he disobeyed he would surely die, but Satan won control over mankind by his first lie: "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 2: 17; 3: 4; Ezek. 18: 4, 20; Rom. 5: 12; 6: 23)?

DO YOU KNOW: That God sentenced Adam to die: "Unto dust shalt thou return," but also said that the woman's seed shall bruise Satan's head (Gen. 3: 14-19)?

+ That, starting with Cain and Abel, Satan has tried to destroy or ensnare the seed of the woman?

+ That Satan before the Flood induced some angels to materialize and marry women, thus producing hybrids and very evil conditions (Gen. 6: 1-7; Jude 6, 7)?

+ That God by the Flood destroyed that "old world" (Greek, *kosmos*, social order)—*not the earth* (Eccl. 1: 4)—saving only Noah and family (2 Pet. 2: 4, 5)?

+ That Satan with the aid of his fallen angels soon enslaved Noah's progeny through Nimrod, began various false religions, *etc.*, and thus by usurpation became "the god [mighty one] of this ['present evil'] world" (Gen. 10: 1-32; 2 Cor. 4: 4; Gal. 1: 4; John 12: 31; 14: 30)?

+ That God promised righteous Abraham that through him and his seed all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12: 1-3; 17: 19, 21; 22: 15-18; 26: 4; 28: 14)?

+ That Satan consequently made special attacks on Isaac, Esau (causing him to sell his birthright), Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the Israelites, Saul, David, Solomon, his progeny, the prophets, *etc.* (Luke 11: 47-51)?

+ That God finally sent His only begotten Son, the promised Seed, to give His life a ransom, so all would be given one full individual trial for eternal life (Gal. 3: 8, 16; Matt. 20: 28; 1 Tim. 4: 10; 1 John 2: 2)?

+ That Satan tried to ensnare or destroy Jesus and finally succeeded in crucifying Him (Matt. 4: 1-11; 8: 24; Luke 4: 29; 22: 3-6, 47, 48; 23: 33, 34)?

+ That God raised Jesus from the dead and exalted Him to the Divine nature (Acts 5: 30, 31; Phil. 2: 9-11)?

+ That Satan, no longer able to attack Jesus personally, tried to destroy the Church, His Body, for it also is a part of Abraham's Seed, that is to bless all mankind (Rom. 12: 5; 4: 13-16; Eph. 1: 18-23; Gal. 3: 7-9, 29)?

+ That God, despite Satan's persecutions, prospered and multiplied the early Church (Acts 2: 41; 5: 14)? DO YOU KNOW: That Satan, failing to destroy the Church by persecutions, perverted it with false doctrines and bad practices (Matt. 13: 24-28; 2 Thes. 2: 3-10; 1 John 4: 3), so the true Church became almost unrecognizable, because of so many tares (imitation Christians)?

+ That God kept His promise never to forsake His loyal people, so amid all Satan's errors and the "gross darkness" upon the people, God gave His true saints "a little help" through such faithful servants as Marsiglio, Wyclif, Huss, Savonarola, Luther, Zwingli, Cranmer, Wesley, *etc.* (Heb. 13: 5, 6; Matt. 28: 20; Isa. 60: 2; Dan. 11: 34; Mic. 5: 5)?

+ That Satan controlled Christendom by "the chained Bible," ignorance, superstition, heathen philosophies and various errors, especially the Divine right of kings, clergy and aristocracy—and to support his first lie (Gen. 3: 4), consciousness of the dead, inherent immortality of the human soul and the blasphemous doctrine of eternal torment, using figurative Bible texts and parables literally and confusing *Hades* and *Gehenna* so as to deceive?

+ That since 1799, in "the time of the end," God has greatly increased knowledge (Dan. 12: 4; Nah. 2: 3, 4)?

+ That with the dispelling of his old errors, Satan and his demons ("seducing spirits") have brought forth new "doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4: 1)—Evolution, Theosophy, Christian Science, New Thought, Mormonism, Rosicrucianism, Universalism, Scientology, *etc.*—and are multiplying "signs and wonders" (2 Thes. 2: 9)—witchcraft, black art, fortune-telling, alleged talking with the dead, Satanism, clairvoyance, spirit-rapping, sorcery, crystal-ball gazing, tea-leaf reading, spirit-writing, hypnotism, ESP, astrology, poltergeists, horoscopes, ouija boards, "flying saucers," *etc.*?

+ That God forbids His people to have anything to do with such media (Ex. 22: 18; Lev. 19: 26, 31; 20: 6, 27; Deut. 18: 9-14; 1 Chron. 10: 13, 14; 2 Kings 21: 6; 2 Chron. 33: 6; Isa. 8: 19, 20; 19: 3, 4; Jer. 29: 8, 9; Zech. 10: 2; Gal. 5: 19-21; Rev. 21: 8; 22: 15)? DO YOU KNOW: That Satan is desperate, seeing God through Christ victorious in refuting his errors by the truth and in using the Time Of Trouble (World War, Revolution and Anarchy) to bind him and demolish his empire, preparatory to establishing God's Kingdom on earth (Rev. 19: 11-21; 11: 15-18; 20: 1-4; 1 Kings 19: 11, 12; Psa. 46: 8-11; 76: 8-10; Dan. 12: 1; Matt. 24: 21, 22; 12: 29; 6: 10; Micah 4: 1-4)?

+ That God "shall bruise Satan under your [the elect Seed's] feet shortly"; for God "will have all men [including the non-elect—1 Tim. 4: 10; Heb. 2: 9; 1 John 2: 2] to be saved [from Adamic

condemnation] and to come unto the [exact] knowledge of the truth" (Rom. 16: 20; 1 Tim. 2: 4-6; Num. 14: 21; Isa. 11: 9)?

+ That in "the new earth [social order]" mankind will have their judgment (trial for life) as they come up the "highway" to human perfection (Acts 17: 31; 2 Pet. 3: 7-13; Isa. 35: 1-10; 65: 17-25; Rev. 21: 1-5; 22: 17)?

+ That Satan, when loosed for mankind's final testing, will soon gain a host of followers, but God will annihilate him and all the wicked (Rev. 20: 3, 7-10; 21: 8; Psa. 37: 9-11, 38; 145: 20; Isa. 43: 17; Heb. 2: 14)?

+ That God will thus have won the contest; for Satan will be no more, "all iniquity shall stop her mouth," and all creatures will praise God and Christ forever (Ezek. 28: 19; Psa. 107: 42; Rev. 5: 12, 13)?



Peace

How It Will Come

DO YOU KNOW: That people in general long for lasting global peace among the nations, but that it always seems very hard to achieve?

- That many view with alarm and fear the continued great stockpiling of deadly weapons, especially nuclear missiles and neutron and other bombs, capable of destroying all mankind?

- That this stockpiling fulfills the Bible prophecy, "Prepare war ... beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel 3: 9, 10)?

- That worldwide there is much sentiment for mutual reduction in making and stockpiling nuclear and other weapons, but the contending nations fear that adequate inspection of one another's arsenal will be impossible and that some nation will continue building up its arsenal secretly?

- That while some measure of reduction in the manufacture and stockpiles of nuclear and other deadly weapons may come from negotiations between the great world powers, such disarmament negotiations will surely end in failure to reach the desired goal of true and lasting peace among the nations?

- That though there is good in it, the present order on earth is Biblically called "this present evil world" and Satan is called "the god of this world" (Gal. 1: 4; John 14: 30; 2 Cor. 4: 4)?

- That God is not powerless to thwart Satan and his evil rulership, but that He has permitted evil in order to work out His purposes, teaching all, including God's people, many valuable lessons?

- That God's permitting evil has nearly accomplished His desired purposes, and that the time has come for Him to destroy Satan's evil empire?

- That since 1914 God has caused the greatest Time of Trouble ever (Dan. 12: 1), and that before it is over Satan's evil rule will be ended?

- That the Prophet Elijah, representing God's true Church, saw a vision of a great destructive wind, earthquake and fire, representing God's Church seeing great war, revolution and anarchy destroying Satan's empire and humbling mankind, so that they will listen to God's "still small voice" speaking real peace (1 Kings 19: 11, 12)?

- That taking his view after the Time of Trouble, the Psalmist says prophetically, "Behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto

the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted in the earth" (Psa. 46: 9-11)?

- That since 1914 there have been two great World War phases, much revolution and anarchy and there is considerably more to come in this great worldwide Time of Trouble, and that if it were not checked by God, all humans would be killed, but that He by the intervention of Jesus and His Church will spare some (Matt. 24: 21, 22; Zeph. 2: 3; 3: 8, 9)?

- That "this present *evil* world" with its false religious systems ("heavens") and social order ("earth") is to be fully destroyed by the destructive trouble ("fire") of this "day of the LORD," and will be replaced by the new religious system of Jesus and His Church ("the new heavens") and their new social order on earth ("the new earth, *wherein dwelleth righteousness*"—2 Pet. 3: 7-13; Isa. 25: 6-9; 35: 1-10; 65: 17-25; Dan. 2: 1-49)?

- That this same Time of Trouble is described in Heb. 12: 26-28 as an earthquake, which violently shakes the heaven and earth, that all things not based on truth and righteousness will be shaken out, and only those properly based—the things of God's Kingdom—will remain, that thus the new government on earth, "the desire of all nations, shall come" (Hag. 2: 6, 7; Rom. 8: 19-22)?

- That Jesus, the great Prince of Peace, will establish the new government of earth, into which people of all nations will come and in which "they shall beat their swords into plowshares ... nation shall not lift up sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more.*" "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Isa. 2: 2-4; 9: 6, 7; Psa. 22: 27-29; 72: 1-20; 86: 9; Mic. 4: 1-4)? *This will be the real, lasting long-sought universal peace!*

- That besides bringing peace eventually to all nations worldwide, Jesus brings peace to all who put their trust in God and Him?

- That if one wants to please God, he first "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11: 6)?

- That we must all recognize that we are sinners of Adam's death-condemned race and repent for our sins and accept Jesus as our own personal Savior, thus having our sins forgiven and becoming justified by faith (Acts 20: 21); and that "being justified by faith we have peace *with* God [and fellowship with Him—1 John 1: 3-7] through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5: 1, 2)?

- That if we dedicate, or consecrate, our lives to God (Prov. 23: 26; Matt. 16: 24; Rom. 12: 1), we get a serenity of heart and mind, a deeper, fuller peace, "the peace of God, which passes all [human] understanding, [which] shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ," keeping us from fear in a fear-filled world (Psa. 119: 165; Isa. 26: 3, 4; John 14: 27; Phil. 4: 6, 7; Col. 3: 15)?



The Judgment Day

DO YOU KNOW: That the thought of the Judgment Day causes *dread* in many, usually because they were mistaught that it is a 24-hour day, when, amid great convulsions of nature—literal earthquakes, graves opening, *etc.*—Christ *calls* from heavenly bliss and horrible torture the billions of the dead, *places them back into the old bodies* they had at death, *sentences* them and then *sends them back*, some to eternal joy in heaven, but the vast majority to eternal torture by fireproof devils—accordingly, the Judgment Day has been termed *Doomsday* (see Dictionary)?

- That this view, that originated in the Dark Ages, makes the Judgment Day quite purposeless—a *farce*?

- That because Adam disobeyed, God sentenced him (and the race in his loins) to *death*, but that God in His great love caused His Son to be "made flesh," "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of *death* ... that he by the grace of God should taste death for *every man*" (Gen. 2: 17; 3: 17-19; Rom. 5: 6-19; Matt. 20: 28; John 1: 14; 3: 14-18; Heb. 2: 9)?

- That these "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all* people," center in Jesus, the "ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time"; they guarantee to "*every man*" one (no *second* chance for any of Adam's race) full, fair *opportunity for everlasting life* (either in this life or after being awakened from the dead—John 5: 28-29, ASV), for God "will have *all* men to be saved [from Adamic condemnation; but *all* will not be saved *eternally*], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (Luke 2: 10; 1 Tim. 2: 3-6; 4: 10)?

- That the term *day* is often used to mean a period much longer than 24 hours, both in common usage (*e.g.*, Luther's day) and in Scriptural usage (Gen. 2: 4; Heb. 3: 8, 9; Psa. 95: 7-10; 2 Cor. 6: 2)?

DO YOU KNOW: That the Gospel Age has been the Church's judgment day (2 Thes. 1: 4, 5; 1 Pet. 4: 17), but that also God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness"—"the day of judgment and perdition [destruction] of ungodly men; but ... be not ignorant of [*forget not*, ASV] this one thing, that *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years*" (Acts 17: 31; 2 Pet. 3: 7, 8; Psa. 90: 4)?

- That Satan, "the god of this world," has for centuries blinded the minds of the vast majority (2 Cor. 4: 4), that darkness has covered the earth, "gross darkness the people," but that in the world's great judgment day he is bound, "*that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled*" (Isa. 60: 2; Rev. 20: 2, 3, 7)?

- That "in that day," the 1,000-year reign of Christ, when He will judge mankind, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"; then "it shall be said ... Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us ... we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 11: 9, 10; 25: 6-9; 40: 5; 52: 10; Jer. 31: 34; Hab. 2: 14)?

- That the word *judge* as used in the Scriptures does not mean merely to *sentence*, but includes (1) *instruction* (Psa. 19: 7-11; 25: 8, 9; 106: 3; 119: 108; Isa. 33: 5; 56: 1; 59: 4, 8-15; Ezek. 22: 2; Matt. 12: 18-20; 23: 23; Col. 2: 16), (2) *testing* (Psa. 26: 1-3, comp. Psa. 139: 23, 24; Jer. 11: 20, comp. Jer. 20: 12; 2 Thes. 1: 4, 5), (3) *chastisement for correction* (Isa. 26: 9; 1 Cor. 11: 31, 32—comp. Luke 12: 47, 48; Heb. 12: 5-11; Rev. 3: 19), and (4) *passing a sentence* (Matt. 7: 1, 2; John 7: 24; Deut. 1: 16; Psa. 17: 2)?

- That Jesus "shall judge [by these 4 processes] the quick [the living] and the dead at [during] his appearing and his kingdom"; "he must reign [in His 1,000-year reign], till he hath put all enemies under his feet; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (2 Tim. 4: 1; 1 Cor. 15: 24-26; Psa. 72: 1-4; Isa. 11: 1-6; 32: 1; Jer. 23: 5, 6; Hos. 13: 14; Rev. 20: 11-15)?

DO YOU KNOW: That Christ's "Bride" and Joint-heir, the true Church, will rule with Him over the earth in the 1,000-year judgment day and assist in judging the world, offering to them "the water of life freely" (1 Cor. 6: 2; Obad. 1: 21; Matt. 19: 28; Luke 22: 29, 30; Rom. 8: 16-21; 2 Tim. 2: 11, 12; Rev. 3: 21; 5: 9, 10; 20: 4, 6; 22: 17)?

- That according to God's Oath-bound promise, Abraham's Seed, *i.e.*, Christ and the Church, will bless "all the families of the earth"; and this will be during their 1,000-year reign (Gen. 12: 3; 22: 16-18; Gal. 3: 7-9, 16, 29; Heb. 6: 13-20; Acts 3: 19-25)?

- That those to be blessed include *the dead* as well as *the living*—that the dead will be awakened from their "sleep" in death (Psa. 6: 5; 146: 4; Dan. 12: 2; John 5: 28-29, ASV; 11: 11-14; 1 Thes. 4: 14; 2 Pet. 3: 4) and will then be given an exact knowledge of the truth and a full *opportunity to gain everlasting life*?

- That eventually "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things [things of Satan's reign, including the curse of sin and death] are passed away" (Rev. 21: 1-4; 22: 1-3; Isa. 35: 10; 65: 17-25)?

- That "when the Son of man shall come in his glory ... then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and [under the testings of that great judgment day] he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats"; and that those with good characters, pictured as sheep, will be given everlasting life and "inherit the kingdom" on earth (the meek shall inherit it—Matt. 5: 5), whereas those who will not have proved worthy, pictured as goats, will "go away into everlasting punishment [Greek, *kolasin*, *cutting off*]," the Second Death, never to live again—"all the wicked will he destroy"; "they shall be as though they had not been" (Matt. 25: 31-46; Psa. 145: 20; Obad. 1: 16; Matt. 10: 28; 2 Pet. 2: 1, 12; Jude 1: 12)?

DO YOU KNOW: That the destruction of the wicked is symbolized by their being cast into "the lake of fire," "which is the second death," into "everlasting fire [fire is an apt symbol, not of

preservation, but of *destruction*], prepared for the devil [who is to be *destroyed, annihilated*—Heb. 2: 14; Ezek. 28: 19] and his angels" (Rev. 20: 14, 15; 21: 8)?

- That "the wages of sin is *death*; but the gift of God is *eternal* life through Jesus Christ," that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," that eventually "every soul, which will not hear [obey] that prophet [Christ], shall be destroyed from among the people" (Rom. 6: 21, 23; John 3: 36; 1 John 5: 12; Psa. 37: 38; Ezek. 18: 4, 20; Acts 3: 19-23)?

- That the Bible shows that the world's judgment day is not *Doomsday*, but *Salvation Day*, when God's Kingdom will rule on earth; so we should rejoice greatly as we see it approaching—"Let the earth be glad ... for he [God] cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth"; "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God," and shall fear (reverence) Him (Psa. 96: 1-13; 98: 1-9; 67: 1-7; Isa. 26: 9; Num. 14: 21)?

The Unknown Newton

Cosmos and Apocalypse

Stephen D. Snobelen

There is a rather curious item among the papers of the philosopher John Locke. Scrawled on a single sheet archived with his personal manuscripts at the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library, it is a chart with seven columns of five to six vertical registers apiece (shown opposite). Locke's note on the reverse gives the year as 1691. But the handwriting on the chart itself is Isaac Newton's. Its contents? Not mathematics (although there are proportions and numbers), not political theory (although political figures are named), not a précis of empiricism (although it is exceptionally empirical in its own way), but the Apocalypse—the Bible's prophetic grand finale. To be more precise, this little document is a time chart depicting how the various dramatic prophecies of the book of Revelation have been and will be fulfilled in history through the guidance of divine Providence.

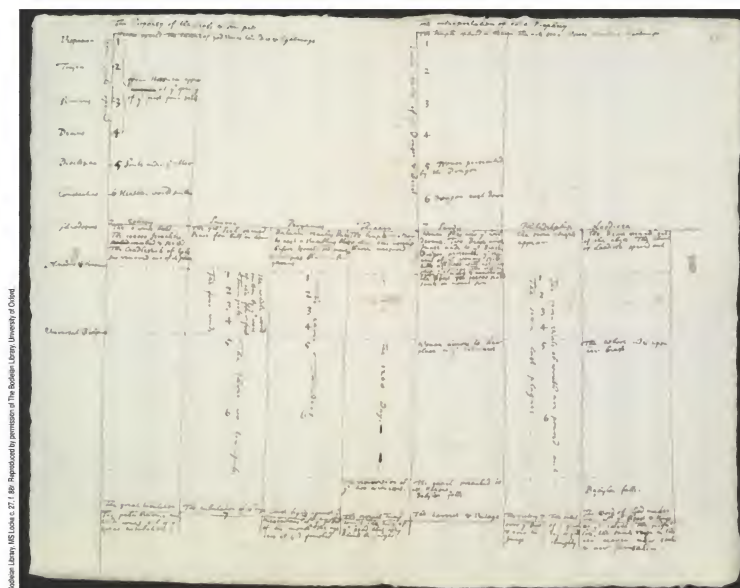
A comparison of this chart with Newton's much more detailed prophetic manuscripts confirms that it outlines the following events: the advance of the Four Horsemen in the early Church; the collapse of pagan Rome; God's judgment on the Roman Empire and its vestiges through the Barbarian, Arab, and Ottoman invasions; the rise of apostate Roman Catholicism; and the 1,260 years of the deepest corruption of the Trinitarian Church, when the Great Whore rides the Beast. All these are followed, near the bottom of the chart, by the fall of Babylon (that is, the Church of Rome); the Battle of Armageddon; the Day of Judgment; and the millennial reign of the saints with Christ in the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem.

According to the popular conception of Newton as chiefly a scientist—one of the greatest and most rational of all time—this chart may appear simply as an antiquarian exploration of history or a mere literary exercise aimed at mapping the symbolic architectonics of the Apocalypse. But

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Newton was a believer; more specifically, he believed in the literal and inevitable fulfillment of the prophecies of the book of Revelation, and of all the other biblical prophecies, including the return of the Jews to Israel. So did Locke. Few documents from this period more thoroughly subvert our conventional images of Locke and Newton as unflickering beacons of the Enlightenment than this obscure handwritten chart.

This is not to deny that Lockean and Newtonian ideas are closely bound up with the thought of the Age of Reason. It is just that the relationships between these two thinkers and the Enlightenment—particularly the French, rationalistic variants—are complicated, multilayered, and all too often distorted in favor of secularizing readings that shun the profoundly religious and biblical impulses in their thought. If an apocalyptic chart strikes us as an unexpected artifact to emerge from the decade-and-a-half friendship between Locke and Newton, celebrated respectively as philosopher and physicist, it is probably because they have for too long been



*Scheme of the book of Revelation that Isaac Newton gave to John Locke (1691).
The arrow of time moves from top to bottom. (For an enlarged view, see
TheNewAtlantis.com.)*

viewed through the lens of the Enlightenment from the eighteenth century to the present. Newton, especially, has for many years, and to a large extent even today, been seen as a paragon of modernity who represents humanity's supposed victory over the superstitions of antiquity.

But several decades of scholarship, along with some propitious twists of fate, have undone the Enlightenment interpretation of Newton. Unquestionably, the single most important cause of its demise is the astonishing evidence provided in Newton's vast unpublished theological, alchemical, and personal papers. By the 1960s—an iconoclastic era in the academy as well as in society—many of these previously inaccessible manuscripts fortuitously became available and led to the first significant wave of revisionist publications based on them. Revolution was in the air, and the disciplines of history and philosophy of science were no exceptions. In 1962, Thomas Kuhn published his epochal book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, in which he argued that radical changes in our scientific understanding (his famous “paradigm shifts”) could happen on other than rational grounds. Scholars were becoming more receptive to the non-scientific contexts of science—be they political, social, cultural, or religious—that were thought to motivate and shape scientific inquiry. These were heady times.

The changes in the 1960s were dramatic not only for the history and philosophy of science, but for science itself. At the time, James Lighthill held the same position that Newton once did as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. When some years later, in a 1986 paper, Lighthill (by then Sir James) reflected on the shifting currents of the 1960s, he offered a formal apology on behalf of physicists for misleading the public about Newton's physics: “We collectively wish to apologize for having misled the general educated public by spreading ideas about the determinism of systems satisfying Newton's laws of motion that, after 1960, were to be proved incorrect.” Lighthill was referring to the recent understanding of chaotic features of these systems, and explained that it was mainly the work of eighteenth-century mathematicians and physicists, such as Pierre-Simon Laplace, that projected onto Newton the belief in a strictly determined, mechanical cosmos.

Among the first to attack this false view of Newton was a young historian of science named David Kubrin, who in 1967 published his revolutionary paper “Newton and the Cyclical Cosmos” in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Kubrin's paper did much to overturn the old and cherished image of Newton the rationalist architect of the clockwork universe. The radical nature of the paper consisted not in its argument that Newton believed in

chapters 11 and 12 of Revelation—it is finally punctuated by the intervention of the divine. This providential irruption into human history brings about cataclysmic events in the short term, but peace and stability in the long term. Thus the end of this period sees the universal preaching of the Gospel, the fall of Babylon (the Catholic Church), the first resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgment, and the beginning of the Millennium. Unlike the amillenarian schemes of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, which predict no literal thousand-year kingdom on earth subsequent to Christ's return, Newton adopted the premillenarian scheme, in which Christ comes to establish this kingdom on earth. (The prefix in "premillenarian" refers to the time of Christ's coming *vis-à-vis* the Millennium.)

A short fragment Newton wrote on the history of Church apostasy helps provide a discursive backdrop to his chart. When "the Heathen Roman empire" was vanquished by Constantine, the Church took on the temporal wealth and power of pagan Rome; this in turn led to a large incursion of insincere pagan converts into the Church. These converts were "the most hypocritical sort of men," who retained their pagan vices and superstitions and were thus only Christian in "profession." While the Roman Empire remained pagan, the limited attraction of Christianity helped "to keep it from growing corrupt." But once Rome became Christian the Church quickly descended into corruption, with Christians all over the empire becoming debased in morals.

On top of this, Christians abandoned the primitive Gospel for false doctrines and practices such as celibacy, monasticism, the veneration of Mary and the saints, the doctrine of three consubstantial persons of the Trinity, and the deity of the Holy Spirit. Newton concluded: "I hope I have now sufficiently proved that the age from the first Conversion of the Empire to Christianity declined perpetually in manners by the influx of immoral & hypocritical heathens: so as within a few years to become as hypocritical & vitious as our own times at least." Evidently, Newton saw the Church of his own day as no less corrupt and in need of the renewal that would come with the universal preaching of the true Gospel.

Reforming the Cosmos

The Bible's language of decline and renewal sometimes takes on cosmic proportions, especially in the poetic and prophetic books. For instance, in the Psalms the eternity of God is contrasted with the earth and even the heavens, which "shall wax old like a garment" (Psalms 102:26). In Isaiah we read: "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens

a cosmos over which God is sovereign, for by the 1960s this was known well enough to scholars. Instead, it consisted in the evidence Kubrin provided for Newton's conception of an explicitly *dynamic* cosmos—one that worked quite unlike a perfect mechanism and was instead subject to dramatic change—and its association with, of all things, biblical prophecy. Partway into the paper, Kubrin revealed his purpose:

It is a commonplace that the Newtonian world-picture consisted of a cosmos which since its Creation *ex nihilo*, had remained substantially the same through the course of time, changing, if at all, only insignificantly. It is, however, a commonplace well worth challenging.

And challenge it he did, in good measure. Kubrin marshaled an impressive array of primary sources to show that “Newton declared, in the 1706 Latin *Opticks*, that the world by itself tended to dissolution, and consequently needed periodic reformation by the Creator.” Newton’s statement was part of a new query he had added to the end of this book that had first been published in English in 1704. In the words of the 1718 English edition, the world could not have originated “out of a Chaos by the mere Laws of Nature,” and although “it may continue by those Laws for many Ages,” over time “some inconsiderable Irregularities... may have risen from the mutual Actions of Comets and Planets upon one another, and which will be apt to increase, till this System wants a Reformation.” Kubrin went on to explain—confounding then-common conceptions both of Newton and of the Scientific Revolution—how Newton came to believe that the cosmos tended to decline over long periods of time and that God used the agency of comets to “renew the amount of motion and the regularity of the motions of the heavenly bodies,” as the cosmos experienced a “continual cyclical recreation.” Along the way, Kubrin also discussed Newton’s interest in ethereal spirits and his engagement with prophetic and millenarian thought.

Now, almost a half-century since Kubrin’s account, we can update it based on additional manuscript evidence not available in the 1960s, including one document that only resurfaced in 2004. These materials not only support Kubrin’s finding that Newton believed in a dynamic (changing) rather than static (unchanging) cosmos, but also suggest that the points of contact between Newton’s cosmological views and his understanding of biblical prophecy are even more numerous and more profound than previously thought. To be sure, there are other possible sources besides the Bible for Newton’s ideas of cosmic dynamism and decline, such as the writings of the ancient Greek poet Hesiod and the Epicurean philosopher

Lucretius (both of which we know Newton had read), or the alchemical tradition, with its own dynamic views of nature. But given Newton's decades-long engagement with biblical prophecy and his massive output of writings about it, not to mention biblical prophecy's concern with the future of the cosmos, I will argue that (beyond his physics) it is principally to the ancient Hebrews that he owes his views of cosmic change.

I will also suggest that an arrow of time—pointing in one direction and toward a particular goal—is the dominant principle governing Newton's understanding of both prophecy and cosmic change (although I nevertheless affirm Kubrin's insight that there are cyclical elements in Newton's cosmos as well). This arrow of time is often degenerative, corruptive, and, if the reader will excuse a bald anachronism, entropic, even if it is ultimately progressive. In sum, Newton's universe winds down, but God also renews it and ensures that it is going somewhere. The analogy of the clockwork universe so often applied to Newton in popular science publications, some of them even written by scientists and scholars, turns out to be wholly unfitting for his biblically informed cosmology.

Prophecy and the *Principia*

At first glance, it may seem that Newton's research into biblical prophecy had nothing to do with his science. After all, what could be more unlike mathematical physics than the book of Revelation? For the non-religious especially, the Apocalypse signifies a superseded age of faith, whereas the *Principia*, Newton's 1687 magnum opus, holds a place of honor in the canon of secularism and points forward to modernity. But instead of imposing modern (and specifically secular) distinctions on our study of Newton, we must ask how Newton himself saw the world. The most important resource for answering this question is the massive collection of his papers left unpublished at his death.

In September 1940, Albert Einstein sent a letter to his friend Abraham Yahuda, who had acquired a number of Newton's manuscripts on theology (which are now in Israel). Einstein, writing in German, commented that in Newton's unpublished writings on the Bible "we have a variety of sketches and ongoing changes that give us a most interesting look into the mental laboratory of this unique thinker." The words translated as "mental laboratory," *geistige Werkstatt*, can also be rendered "spiritual workshop." Whatever Einstein meant, both senses may apply. The ambiguity of Einstein's description raises an important question: Could Newton's efforts at interpreting the Bible before, during, and after he composed the

first edition of the *Principia* have had an impact on the book's contents of natural philosophy—its physics, astronomy, and cosmology? It may never be possible to answer such a question with clarity and certainty, since it involves the inner workings of a mind from three centuries ago. But the manuscript evidence is suggestive at the very least.

What examples would qualify as creative interplay between Newton's study of prophecy and his great *Principia*? Some of the "Rules for interpreting the words & language in Scripture" he devised for his early treatise on the Apocalypse bear at least a superficial resemblance to the four "Rules of Reasoning in Philosophy" that he had developed through the three editions of the *Principia*. Newton stresses the need for parsimony, both in the interpretation of Scripture and in natural philosophy. For example, the ninth rule of biblical interpretation is, "To choose those constructions which without straining reduce things to the greatest simplicity," while the first rule of reasoning in philosophy reads, "*No more causes of natural things should be admitted than are both true and sufficient to explain their phenomena.*"

Now, parsimony, or Ockham's Razor, as it is commonly known, is of course a *leitmotif* in the history of science and Western thought more generally, so perhaps we should not read too much into this parallel. But the rules for interpreting Scripture also offer us better evidence for a connection between Newton's natural philosophy and his interpretation of prophecy. This is how Newton explains the rule of biblical interpretation just mentioned, where he compares simplicity in understanding nature with simplicity in interpreting prophetic visions:

Truth is ever to be found in simplicity, & not in the multiplicity & confusion of things. As the world, which to the naked eye exhibits the greatest variety of objects, appears very simple in its internal constitution when surveyed by a philosophic understanding, & so much the simpler by how much the better it is understood, so it is in these visions. It is the perfection of God's works that they are all done with the greatest simplicity. He is the God of order & not of confusion. And therefore as they that would understand the frame of the world must endeavour to reduce their knowledge to all possible simplicity, so it must be in seeking to understand these visions.

At the time Newton wrote this—perhaps as much as ten years before he began to compose the *Principia*—he evidently believed that an assumption of simplicity should apply to both the interpretation of the book of Scripture and the interpretation of the book of Nature: they are linked because both are revelations of God.

What of the 1680s, when Newton wrote the *Principia*? Given that his prophetic researches continued throughout that decade (and indeed until the end of his life), there would have been opportunities for cross-fertilization at that time. It is noteworthy, therefore, that one important clue to Newton's own thinking about the relationship of prophetic interpretation to his work in physics is found in a somewhat unexpected place: a scholium—an extended explanatory comment—on the definitions near the beginning of the *Principia*. In the first part of this comment Newton discusses the need to distinguish between the absolute and relative in physics, in particular with respect to time, space, place, and motion. The relative refers to how we commonly see and experience them, whereas the absolute is their true, measured, mathematical quantity. Newton urges that the two different ways of speaking—ordinary and mathematical—not be confused. The confusion corrupts mathematics and philosophy, he explains; at the same time, people who “interpret these words as referring to the quantities being measured do violence to the Scriptures.”

It is not very obvious in the published *Principia* what Newton meant by this reference to the Bible. But a draft of the same passage written around 1685 helps clarify things. There Newton elaborates that

common people, who do not know how to abstract their thoughts from their senses, always speak of relative quantities, to the point where it would be absurd for either wise men or even for the Prophets to speak otherwise among them. Whence both the Scriptures and the writings of Theologians are always to be understood of relative quantities, and he would be laboring with a gross prejudice who thence stirred up disputations about the philosophical motions of natural things. [trans. I. Bernard Cohen]

A final sentence, although struck through in the manuscript, further reveals Newton's argument: “It's just as if someone should contend that the Moon in the first chapter of Genesis was counted among the two greatest lights not by its apparent, but by its absolute, magnitude.” Genesis speaks of the sun and the moon as two great lights. But as an astronomer Newton knew that the moon was not a great light in the heavens in terms of absolute magnitude (indeed, it is not even a light, but only a reflector). For Newton, the description in Genesis is not astronomical, but rather expresses a terrestrial perspective commensurate with the capacities of ordinary people. Understanding that the Bible does not use the absolute language of physics avoids a conflict between science and biblical teaching—a principle for which Galileo is famous but which has in

fact ancient Jewish and Christian origins, as in the Talmudic maxim that the Torah speaks the language of man.

Newton's reflections on the similarities and differences between interpreting Scripture and nature show that he thought of the two as connected in important ways. Making the necessary allowances for their respective kinds of language—relative to human experience, and absolute—we should expect Newton's interpretations of prophecy and his scientific work to have points of contact. As we shall see, they in fact do.

Renewing the Church

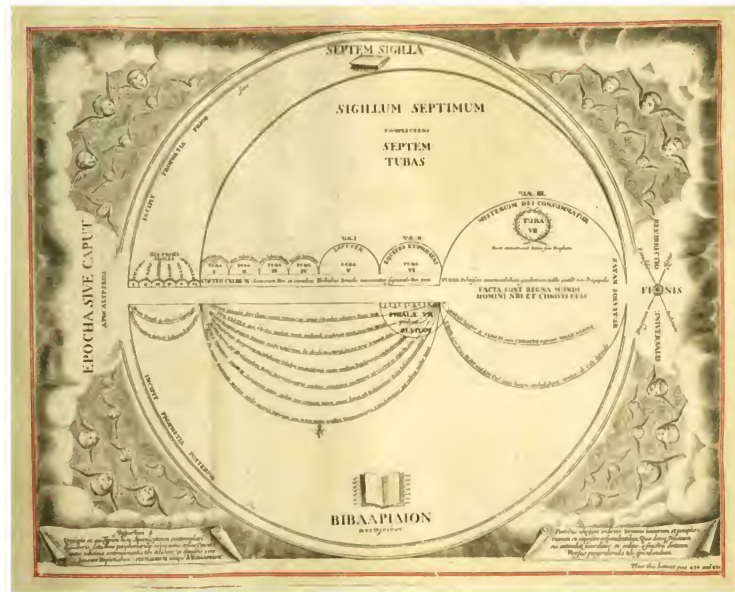
The apocalyptic time chart Newton gave to his friend John Locke provides a helpful starting point for thinking about Newton's views on time and history, distilling key ingredients of Newton's thousands of pages of writings about the book of Revelation. Similar charts were already prominent at the time, particularly those by Joseph Mede (1586–1638) and Henry More (1614–1687), both Fellows of Christ's College, Cambridge. Mede, who in Newton's eyes was a kind of prince of prophetic interpreters, was famous for his book *Clavis Apocalyptica*, which in its 1632 edition included a well-known chart of Revelation (see next page). As for More, who had published several Mede-inspired apocalyptic charts in his lifetime, Newton knew him personally and had discussions (and evidently debates) with him on biblical prophecy. Newton owned the third edition of Mede's *Works* (1672), which includes the *Clavis Apocalyptica* and its chart; he also owned three of More's books on prophecy, one of which contains a chart.

The recent discovery of Newton's personal copy of Mede's *Works* in the collections of the Huntington Library in San Marino, California provides physical testimony to Newton's engagement with his favorite prophetic exegete.* Like most books from Newton's personal library, this volume does not contain annotations; instead, it is filled with Newton's characteristic dog-ears, marking passages of interest to him, well over half of which are to prophetic commentary. This work, more than any other, canonized the historicist interpretation of the book of Revelation, which takes the symbols of the prophecy and puts them on a timeline of

* In preparing this essay for publication, I requested one of The Huntington Library's two copies of the third edition of Mede's *Works*, so that I could order a reproduction of Mede's apocalyptic chart from the same edition Newton owned. When I opened the book and saw the "Musgrave" bookplate—one of several signs that a book comes from Newton's library—I realized to my surprise that this was not merely the same edition Newton owned, but the very copy he owned. (The full story of this discovery can be read in "Newton's Lost Copy of Mede, Revealed" on the Huntington blog "Verso.")

Church and political history from the end of the first century up to and including Christ's literal millennial kingdom and beyond. For Mede, as for Newton after him, Revelation was no mere timeless allegory, but a guide to real historical events.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of these apocalyptic charts is their linear progression, as if by an arrow of time, to the end of world history. In Mede's chart, time moves from left to right through the book of Revelation; in Newton's, time moves from top to bottom. Like many Protestant interpreters, Newton believed that the book of Revelation foretold the decline of the original, pure form of Christianity into corruption and apostasy, preeminently Roman Catholicism, except that Newton seems to have enlarged this conception to cover all Trinitarian churches. But while the long downward slide of increasing corruption is unmistakable—encompassing the 1,260 days, which are taken to be years, mentioned in



Joseph Mede's scheme of the book of Revelation from Isaac Newton's personal copy of Mede's Works (1672). The arrow of time moves from left to right. (For an enlarged view, see TheNewAtlantis.com.)

shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isaiah 34:4)—a passage Newton cited in his prophetic writings. But Isaiah offers the hope of renewal as well: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth" (Isaiah 65:17)—the text echoed again near the end of the book of Revelation. While in the world of the Bible the theme of decline—whether in spiritual, political, or cosmic affairs—is pervasive, the progressive arrow of time always prevails, aiming toward divine redemption and restoration and the New Creation.

Although Newton often treated biblical passages of cosmic decline and renewal as political analogies, it is conceivable that his repeated reading of them over the decades of his biblical studies provided one source for his tendency to think of the cosmos in terms of actual decline and renewal. His view of cosmic change fits the pattern in surprising ways, as is evident from closer inspection of the section of the *Opticks* to which Kubrin drew attention in his paper. In the query that was eventually numbered 31 in later English editions of the *Opticks*, Newton wrote that motion in the cosmos always decreases and is therefore in continual need of conservation and renewal "by active Principles, such as are the cause of Gravity, by which Planets and Comets keep their Motions in their Orbs, and Bodies acquire great Motion in falling." Without these principles, "the Bodies of the Earth, Planets, Comets, Sun, and all things in them would grow cold and freeze, and become inactive Masses; and all Putrefaction, Generation, Vegetation and Life would cease, and the Planets and Comets would not remain in their Orbs."

At the same time, Newton explains later in the same text, gravity may give rise to small irregularities that "will be apt to increase, till this System wants a Reformation. Such a wonderful Uniformity in the Planetary System must be allowed the Effect of Choice."

Newton realized that universal gravity signaled the end of Kepler's stable orbits along perfect ellipses. These regular geometric forms might work in theory and in a two-body system, but not in the real cosmos where many more bodies are involved. This is because the third, fourth, fifth, and other bodies in the gravitational field introduce subtle perturbations into a particular planet's elliptical path (a problem he discussed in Book I of the *Principia*). Newton understood that the mathematics required to describe these complex motions would be impossibly difficult, writing that "it would exceed the force of human wit to consider so many causes of motion at the same time." Crucially, these perturbations are a direct consequence of the force of universal gravity, which Newton himself introduced to physics.

It was this passage about the need for a reformation of the cosmic system that caused the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

great dismay and helped to set off his 1715–1716 epistolary debate with the Newtonian Samuel Clarke. Why, Leibniz objected, would a well-designed cosmos need any intervention from God? In his view, a decaying cosmos was a theological barbarism. It entailed that God was like an inept clockmaker, lacking the foresight to design a perfect mechanism and thus having to intervene to repair and tinker with it.

But the ideal of a perfect, clock-like universe was Leibniz's, not Newton's. In his first reply to Leibniz, Clarke rejected the clock emphatically:

The Notion of the World's being a great *Machine*, going on *without the Interposition of God*, as a Clock continues to go without the Assistance of a Clockmaker; is the Notion of *Materialism* and *Fate*, and tends...to exclude *Providence* and *God's Government* in reality out of the World.

Despite Clarke's efforts, over time the clockwork universe came to be identified with the Newtonian view, even to this day. This description by eminent astrophysicist Paul Davies in *God and the New Physics* (1983) is typical: "According to Newton's theory, the universe is like a giant clockwork, unwinding along a rigid, predetermined pathway towards an unalterable final state. The course of every atom is presumed to be legislated and decided in advance, laid down since the beginning of time." Yet it was Leibniz who introduced the clockwork analogy, while the Newtonians explicitly rejected it precisely because they found it incompatible with their view of the continuously sovereign God of the Bible (a dynamic about which, to be sure, Leibniz had his own sophisticated views).

One consequence of the false attribution of the clockwork universe to Newton is that his idea of God's interventions in the cosmos is sometimes used as a textbook example of the so-called "God of the gaps." This pejorative expression refers to an intellectually lazy way of ascribing a seemingly unexplainable phenomenon (a gap in our knowledge) to the workings of God. Invoking God in this way is said to be a "science-stopper," as God becomes a substitute for scientific inquiry. To make matters worse, the argument goes, as science continues to advance and fill these gaps in knowledge, God continues to retreat from the cosmos and is left with increasingly little to do.

Of course, Newton is of all people among the last to be guilty of intellectual laziness. More to the point, his God is nothing like the God of the gaps, and there is no evidence that God was ever a "science-stopper" for him. (If anything, his theism helped motivate his work in natural philosophy.) The criticism misunderstands the way Newton saw God acting in the world. According to a common form of the God-of-the-gaps critique,

Newton believed that the cosmos is a wound-up clock that normally functions autonomously following natural laws (as in deism), and since he supposedly could not find a natural explanation for the clock's periodic adjustments—which he presumed to be necessary to make up for its slight and increasing irregularities—he could only explain them in terms of supernatural intervention. To the contrary, Newton was no part-time deist and instead believed (as he put it in a draft text related to the *Principia*) that God through his Providence both “made and governs the world.” Clarke elaborated on this same position in his reply to Leibniz, writing that God “not only composes or puts Things together, but is himself the Author and continual Preserver of their *Original Forces* or *moving Powers*. And consequently tis not a *diminution*, but the true *Glory* of his Workmanship, that *nothing* is done without his *continual Government* and *Inspection*.”

Unlike the God-of-the-gaps way of thinking, Newton did not believe that the cause of a given phenomenon is either natural or supernatural. God is the “first cause,” but he still uses the physical world to act on the physical world—whether it be prophets in Israel or comets in the cosmos. So even though for Newton the universe would collapse without God's Providence, and God is behind its motions, the physical world is all along subject to laws and open to mathematical description.

Newton's language of cosmic decline and renewal has religious overtones that help to show that he viewed the entire cosmos as under God's continual governance. In the Latin edition of the *Opticks*, he used the phrase *manum emendatricem* (“amending hand”), which suggests direct, divine intervention. In a subsequent English edition, he chose the word “Reformation,” noteworthy because of that word's association with religious renewal. It is in fact likely that Newton considered this language for the renewal of the cosmos around the same time that he composed a theological manuscript discussing religious reformations. One of the central claims of this manuscript, entitled “Irenicum,” is that the original religion—consisting of the two greatest commandments as outlined by Christ: loving God and loving one's neighbor—was the pure monotheism practiced by Noah and his family, and that over time it was corrupted. Newton repeatedly describes God's interventions to restore this religion as “reformations.” Moses “reformed the Israelites.” Likewise, the prophets and then Christ reformed the true religion, and now that “the Gentiles have corrupted themselves we may expect that God in due time will make a new reformation.” Whenever mankind has deviated from the true religion, “God has made a reformation.” Man corrupts and God restores. The pattern is one of a consistent tendency of religion toward degradation and

the constant need for God to set it back on course via faithful prophets and religious reformations—very much like the cosmos that because of its inherent irregularities requires occasional reformations of its own. The story of human religion and the story of the dynamic cosmos share similar plotlines. For Newton, the same Providence seamlessly sustains both humanity and the cosmos and, when need be, sets them back on course.

Comet Apocalypse

It is possible that one of the main reasons the clockwork image of the universe is still attributed to Newton is that his physics in the *Principia* is so thoroughly mathematical. But a closer look at the evolution of the book shows once again just how inadequate that image really is.

Among the Cambridge University Library's large collection of eight hundred folios of draft papers for all three editions of the *Principia* is a sheet containing material on comets from the first edition (Book Three, Proposition XLI). On this sheet, Newton observes that "the vapors which arise from the sun, fixed stars, and tails of Comets seem to be condensed in the Planets," where they are turned into all organic matter, from water and dirt to vegetation and animals. "Thus comes about the perpetual interchange of all things. . . ." Alchemical notions seem here to inform Newton's dynamic view of nature and a cosmos that plays a direct and active part in the life cycles on earth. (The connection to alchemy is perhaps even more evident in the *Principia*'s 1713 edition, which adds in a similar comment that the cosmic vapors, after turning to water and "humid spirits" are transformed "by a slow heat" into the various substances in the earth.) In contrast to these busy changes, God "alone remains immutable," and has arranged the cosmos in such a way that despite its dynamic nature it is stable, for instance "by removing the fixed stars to convenient distances lest they fall into one another," or by having the planets move around the same center, on the same plane, and in the same direction.

The 1713 edition of the *Principia* contained even more material on the dynamic cosmos not included in the first. Newton reasons (in Book Three, Proposition XLII) that because of the large number of comets, their tremendous distance from the sun at their farthest points from it, and the great length of time spent away from the sun, "they should be disturbed somewhat by their gravities toward one another," resulting in alterations in the shape and periods of their orbits. About the comet of 1680 (which Newton personally observed with his telescope) and its extremely close approach to the sun, Newton writes that the sun's gravitational force sped

up the comet when it neared the sun, whose atmosphere then slowed down the comet, drawing the two bodies slightly closer together. (This also shows that friction, not just gravity, contributes to his dynamic universe.) Newton imagined that the comet, in repeating this pattern, “approaching closer to the sun in every revolution...will at length fall into the body of the sun.” (An engraving from the first edition of the *Principia* showing the comet of 1680 can be seen below.) Newton continues that, when the comet is farthest away from the sun,

when it moves most slowly, the comet can sometimes be slowed down by the attraction of other comets and as a result fall into the sun. So also fixed stars, which are exhausted bit by bit in the exhalation of light and vapors, can be renewed by comets falling into them and then, kindled by their new nourishment, can be taken for new stars.

Newton’s so-called clockwork universe is hardly timeless, regular, and machine-like; instead, it acts more like an organism that is subject to ongoing growth, decay, and renewal.

Newton also addressed this theme in his famous General Scholium appended to the end of the 1713 and 1726 editions of the *Principia*. In that pithy text, Newton discussed, among other things, the system of planets and comets, claiming that the combination of planets moving in the same direction in a near plane together with the free and extremely eccentric



Engraving showing the comet of 1680 from Isaac Newton’s *Principia* (1687). The comet moves along the solid orbital line from the top right around the sun in the far left to the bottom right. The broad strokes represent the comet’s tail as observed by Newton and others on the dates marked along the orbit, from November 1680 to March 1681. (For an enlarged view, see TheNewAtlantis.com.)

orbits of the comets could not have had “their origin in mechanical causes.” (By this Newton seems to have meant *purely* mechanical causes—mere contact motion—without the agency of God.)

Then follows Newton’s articulation of the design argument, which also affirms the unity of the cosmos:

This most elegant system of the sun, planets, and comets could not have arisen without the design and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being. And if the fixed stars are the centers of similar systems, they will all be constructed according to a similar design and subject to the dominion of *One*, especially since the light of the fixed stars is of the same nature as the light of the sun, and all the systems send light into all the others.

In the 1726 edition, Newton added a new sentence immediately after this: “And so that the systems of the fixed stars will not fall upon one another as a result of their gravity, he has placed them at immense distances from one another.” (This is similar to what some today call the fine-tuning of the universe.) The implication, again, is that gravity can be a destabilizing force. (An annotation in Newton’s own copy of the 1713 edition shows that the sentence he had originally considered adding was the even more theologically charged statement that “the systems of the fixed stars would, through their gravity, gradually fall on each other, were they not carried back by the counsel of the supreme Being.”)

The instability of the cosmos also implies for Newton that the earth is not eternal. A manuscript fragment on the corruption of Christianity—sold in 1936, when the bulk of Newton’s unpublished writings were put up for auction in London, and reappearing at a 2004 auction in New York—includes a comment that is largely struck through but that reveals a significant train of thought. If one considers, Newton writes, the evidently short history of mankind (judging by the inventions that have survived), the constantly changing substances in the earth and water, and the fact that “the orbs of the Planets & Comets are unstable, & that new stars appear & old ones disappear: he will see reason to believe that the several species of living creatures in this earth were not eternal, that the globe of this earth & sea was not eternal” and that we ought therefore to be thankful to God for our existence and sustenance.

Most of these ideas about an unstable cosmos—constantly and at times violently changing—never saw the light of day in Newton’s lifetime, or for a long time afterward. One such testimony now publicly available that provides further illumination is the record of a conversation he had in his home

just two years before his death with his nephew-in-law John Conduitt. Through judicious questioning, Conduitt was able to pry from Newton some of his personal thoughts about the past and future of the earth and its solar system. Conduitt, in his account of their talk, emphasized that Newton offered only his conjecture (“he would affirm nothing”). Newton explained that, presumably in the earth’s distant past, “there was a sort of revolution in the heavenly bodies,” when the emission of the sun’s vapors and light formed a body that gradually grew into a planet by attracting matter from other planets and then grew even bigger into a comet, “which after certain revolutions by coming nearer & nearer the sun had all its volatile parts condensed & became a matter fit to recruit & replenish the sun (which must waste by the constant heat & light it emitted).” The comet of 1680 would probably someday fall into the sun the same way, heating the sun up so much that the earth would be burned (Newton seems to have meant its surface only), causing the death of all the animals. Newton also suggested that there were “intelligent beings superior to us who superintended these revolutions of the heavenly bodies by the direction of the supreme being.”

When Conduitt pressed Newton on how the earth could or would be repopulated with humans after such a cataclysm, Newton answered “that required the power of a creator.” Conduitt pressed even further, asking why he would not make these ideas public simply as conjectures. Newton replied, “I do not deal in conjectures.” Conduitt was nothing if not persistent, and, continuing to push Newton, asked about the comet of 1680 and the timing of its appearances, when Newton reached for a copy of the *Principia* on a nearby table, opened it up, and showed him the account of its past appearances. Conduitt, for his part, pointed out the passage where Newton described that comet falling into the sun, and the fixed stars being replenished by comets, and asked “why he would not own as freely what he thought of the sun as well as what he thought of the fixed stars.” Newton’s memorable reaction was, “that concerned us more, & laughing added he had said enough for people to know his meaning.” Blessed as we are today with access to Newton’s private papers, we are not limited to the published text of his great scientific work and thus no longer have to guess at his meaning—its religious aspects, or, more broadly, the theological dimensions of Newton’s cosmos.

Newton in Motion

The relationship between Newton’s work on astronomy, cosmology, and physics on the one hand, and his private manuscripts on history, theology,

and prophecy on the other, reveals a number of distinctive features that ought to challenge the textbook version of Newton still common today. The impression that Newton believed in a purely mechanical and thoroughly mathematical universe is misplaced. Newton emphatically rejected the clockwork universe that is generally associated with him and that is often contrasted with thermodynamic and entropic notions of the cosmos that arose in the nineteenth century. A clockwork universe arguably does not require the constant dominion of God, and, what is more, is perhaps (at least conceptually) a *challenge* to the dominion of God. Yet God's constant involvement in the cosmos was the very thing that Newton desired to uphold, committed as he was to the Scripture's view of Providence.

Nor did Newton advocate an unchanging, static universe. Instead, he recognized that gravity could be a destabilizing as well as a stabilizing force: gravitational forces lead to an accumulation of disturbances over time, such that the cosmos can be said to follow a path of internal development, a unidirectional process in time. The trajectory toward decline has its remedy in the God of dominion, who reforms and adjusts to keep the cosmos orderly, and who recreates when the time comes for a new heaven and a new earth. Newton's cosmos is not deterministic in the secular and materialistic senses often applied to him; nevertheless, its future is ultimately guided by divine action.

Similarly, Newton's view of human history is characterized by profound and often dramatic changes following a course with a God-ordained end. Humanity, civilizations, and religion tend to fall from order to disorder and from true religion to apostasy, as people are unable to sustain the purity of loving neighbor and loving God. Over time, religion inevitably becomes corrupt. While there may be small repeating cycles of rising and falling, the unidirectional arrow of salvation history remains dominant. Although both the human sphere and the cosmos are inherently unstable, both are also under the continuous dominion and sovereignty of God and thus remain dependent on him (perhaps designedly so).

Newton provides a rich case study of the relationship between science and religion in the early era of modern science. Some students of his life and work might want to see a "science-first" principle, in which Newton's science shapes his religion, whereas others might want to contend for a "religion-first" principle, in which Newton's religion guides his science. No doubt there are examples of both. But the truth of the matter is, like his cosmos, much more complex than one might at first suspect. In Newton's intellectual universe, physics and prophecy, together with other disciplines, move much like planets in mutually reinforcing orbits. In

some way probably too difficult to calculate, what we see here is a kind of harmonic resonance and subtle feedback relationship between Newton's observations of the cosmos and his study of the Apocalypse.

But even if the relation between Newton's prophetic and natural philosophical thought cannot be defined with precision, it is clear that the two do not merely share many similarities. For Newton, the history and future of the cosmos are contained within the biblical timeframe from Genesis to Revelation: God created the earth, sustains it, renews it, and ultimately makes all things new. Although Newton's engagement with biblical prophecy only played a minor role in the development and structure of his *Principia*, understanding his writings on prophecy can help illuminate not only the book's historical context but also its content. Whatever a modern might think of this interaction between putatively separate disciplines, it made sense to Newton precisely because he ultimately believed in the unity of reality—and that all reality, whether of the cosmos and its future or of Scripture and the future it portends, is God's, created by his boundless power and sustained by his sovereign will.

5. The Lamb and the Beast

We have just noted that the Revelation is not a revelation *to* anyone apart from God's servants. The reason for this is because it's not a revelation of anything except Jesus Christ. People often call the book "Revelations" (plural), as though it's a box of goodies that one can pick and choose from. Even the people who put together the various books of the Bible into the one volume had trouble with naming this one. They called it "The Revelation of St. John the Divine". But that's not the title of the book either. The real title appears in the opening words: "The Revelation of *Jesus Christ*."

The key to understanding The Revelation, and all that it had to say about the future, is to believe the teachings of Jesus. People have tried to make The Revelation say all sorts of things that it never says; and they have almost always concluded that it is a revelation that their church or their denomination is the right one and all others are wrong. But it's not a revelation of any such thing.

The Revelation is a poetic picture of how the teachings and example of Jesus Christ work to overcome all the evil forces in the world. The amazing accuracy of its predictions is there to give hope to those of us who will be called on to die for our faith, particularly in the years just before Christ returns to rule the earth. They are not there to startle and amaze the general public.

(Bible passages referred to in each chapter appear in an appendix at the end of each chapter.)

In the tenth chapter of The Revelation (verses 9-10) an angel comes to John with a "little book" that he tells him to eat. He says the book will start out tasting as sweet as honey when he puts it in his mouth, but by the time it reaches his stomach, it'll be "bitter". This is a good description of The Revelation. It's great fun to crack the code and work out some of the mysteries. But when you've finally seen what it is revealing, far from feeling entertained, you'll feel more responsible for the evils of the world, and for taking (or not taking) a stand against them. So once again, we must warn those who come to read this book just out of curiosity: You are not going to like what you find.

Christ had a problem with all the hoop-la about anything supernatural. People with bad spirits in them were always trying to spout off about him being the Son of God, and he was always telling them to shut up. (Mark 3:11-12) He told his disciples to do the same thing. (Mark 8:29-30) Whenever he healed someone, he would tell them to keep it quiet. (Mark 1:44; 5:42-43; 7:35-36) He said, "An evil generation seeks miracles, but they will not be given what they want. All they will get is the sign that Jonah gave to Nineveh." (Luke 11:29-30) (Note: All that Jonah gave Nineveh was the truth... from both barrels; and they repented as a result of it.)

The record shows that Jesus gave the general public quite a few miracles. But he did not *indulge* them by doing so. *He* called the shots. He decided whether he was going to do a miracle or not; and "an evil generation" did not like it. They wanted to be able to harness his powers and use them for their own selfish ends. (John 6:26)

We human beings just naturally feel that if someone could do a really convincing job of healing the sick or raising the dead or predicting the future, then people would recognise that person's spiritual authority, and start following God. But Jesus knew better. And that is one of the themes of The Revelation: God's ways are not our ways.

In The Revelation, Jesus Christ is referred to as "The Lamb". And the various kings and empires throughout world history are referred to as "Beasts". What the book reveals is how a harmless sheep... make that a harmless *baby* sheep... no, less than that: a harmless *slain* baby sheep... conquers all the raging and roaring empires of the world. How unbelievable!

The "Lamb" does so in direct contradiction to all our natural expectations. And he does so in order that God's power and God's wisdom might be more dramatically demonstrated. This is consistent with all that Jesus Christ taught. He was always emphasising the paradox of winning through losing, of turning the other cheek, of the meek inheriting the earth.

The "Beast" of Revelation is a carry-over from the writings of Daniel, in the Old Testament, where he used animals to depict world empires. Daniel lived at the time of the Babylonian Empire. A lion with wings was its symbol. Daniel had a dream one night (recorded in Daniel 7:2-7), in which he saw a lion with eagle's wings. But the wings were eventually plucked, and the lion became a man. Then he saw a bear, followed by a panther with four wings and four heads.

The last creature that Daniel saw really bothered him. It was a cross between an animal and a machine, with iron teeth, brass claws, and ten horns, each of which represented a different leader. It was "dreadful and terrible" as it "devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the residue with the feet of it." Finally, Daniel saw "The Ancient of Days" overthrow the thrones of all these beasts. He saw "The Son of Man" come with the clouds of heaven (Daniel 7:13-14) and receive a kingdom which will never be destroyed.

Understand that Daniel was writing many years before Jesus Christ was even born. "The Ancient of Days" is a term for God, whereas "The Son of Man", as we have said, is a term for the promised Messiah. Christ had not yet come at that time.

Daniel prayed for an interpretation of his dream, and God told him: "These great beasts are four kings that will arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High will take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever and ever." (Daniel 7:17)

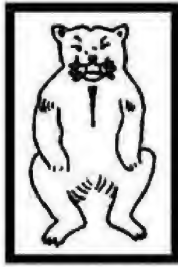
The "saints" who take over the kingdom are followers of Christ (or the Messiah), who conquers all of these kingdoms, including the most horrible last one. The Jews just naturally assumed from this that the Christ must be a powerful warrior. So when Jesus came, born in a manger, living almost as a beggar, and teaching humility and love, even his closest followers found it hard to think of him as the Christ. How could his meek approach conquer the Roman Empire (or any empire for that matter)? As expected, rather than conquering anything, he himself was finally captured and killed: The Lamb was slain.

But history has shown that this one man, who never wrote a book, never owned a home, never led an army, never held any political office... this Lamb of a man has changed and influenced more lives than anyone else who has ever lived. The whole world measures time from his birth. And he promises to come yet again in the near future to establish a visible kingdom here on earth.

Until he comes, all we have are "beasts". Daniel saw a lion with the wings of an eagle, a bear, and a panther. Do these animals represent any countries in the world today? Is there a country that is symbolised by a lion? Does it have any connection with a country symbolised by an eagle? Is there a country symbolised by a bear? And what about the panther (or leopard)? It had four different heads. Could the panther represent several different countries?

The world in the last half of the Twentieth Century was divided between two super-powers - America and Russia - with a rising influence from The Third World on one hand and China on the other. The eagle is the symbol for America (and the lion is the symbol for England, from which the eagle has grown); the bear is the symbol for Russia; and the panther is the symbol for Black Power, or the militant Third World. More on China (the Dragon) later in this book.

Here we have the symbols for the three major political forces of the Twentieth Century, plus one final "Beast" which eventually puts the other three to shame with its power and brutality.



RUSSIA

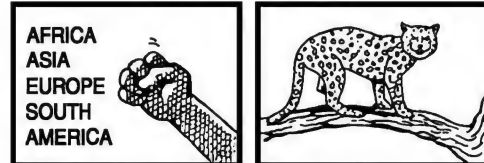
Of course this *could* just be coincidence. Mention of eagles, bears and panthers doesn't prove anything in itself. But please be patient until you have seen more of the evidence to suggest that the prophecies are talking about the times in which we now live.

To start us in that direction, we will look at a prophecy which is *not* open to so many interpretations. In the next chapter, we will look at a prophecy which is probably the most astounding and most verifiable prophecy in the entire Bible. Hundreds of years before the birth of the One whom Christians call The Messiah, the Hebrew prophet Daniel had predicted the year in which the Messiah would die. Read on and see for yourself.

BABYLON



THE THIRD WORLD



***For more information related to this chapter, please check out the following video: Survivors Ch. #17 - Dangchao (The Antichrist Revealed)**

Appendix, Chapter 5

Revelation 10:9-10. *"I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take it and eat it up; and it will make your belly bitter, but it will be in your mouth sweet as honey." And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.* Mark 3:11-12. *Unclean spirits... fell down before him and cried, saying, "You are the Son of God!" And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known".*

Mark 8:29-30. *"... Peter ... said to him, "You are the Christ." And he charged them that they should tell no man of him."*

Mark 1:44. *He said unto him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded..."*

Mark 5:42-43. *Straightway the damsel arose and walked... and they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no one should know it."*

Mark 7:35-36. *"Straightway his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed and he spoke plainly. And [Jesus] charged them that they should tell no one."*

John 6:26. *Jesus answered, "You seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled."*

Daniel 7:2-7. *Daniel said, "I saw in my vision by night... and four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings... Behold another beast, a second, like a bear... After this I beheld and lo, another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth Beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly. It had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it. It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns."*

Daniel 7:9-11. *"I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of days did sit... A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him... I beheld even till the Beast was slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame."*

Daniel 7:13-14. *"Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of days ... And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."*

Daniel 7:16-18. *"I came near to one of them that stood by and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."*

18. The Mark of the Beast

Now we come to what is probably the most remarkable and irrefutable prophecy of the New Testament. Unlike the Seventy Weeks prophecy there is no fixed date for this prophecy; but it is impressive because it is virtually free of double meanings or confusing symbols, and it accurately describes revolutionary developments in world banking that are being planned and implemented right now, even though they would have been unthinkable at the time that the prophecy was written.

The first half of Revelation 13 introduces the Beast (or Antichrist) and a False Prophet (more about them shortly). The second half of the chapter explains how they will be able to control the world through a new economic system. The prophecy says, "He (the Beast) causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, [so] that no one might buy or sell save those that had the mark or the name of the Beast or the number of his name." (Revelation 13:16-17)

The world's banks are feverishly working toward a monetary system which is based on a tiny computer chip about the size of a grain of rice. The chip can be planted under the skin on the back of your hand and waved in front of a scanner the way items are waved at the supermarket now. It will be able to record every purchase you make, automatically transferring funds from one account to another, in such a way that it could virtually make money obsolete.

Implant Could Replace Credit Cards

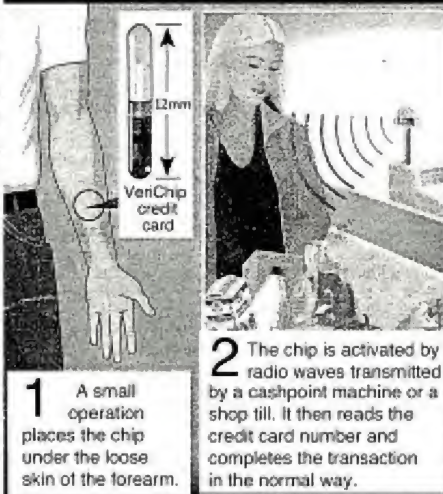
(The London, Evening Standard, 29th November, 2003) by Mark Prigg

Scientists have invented a credit-card chip they claim can be implanted into your arm, allowing you to authorise payments by simply standing near a cash register. The tiny chip, the size of a grain of rice, uses radio waves to tell registers or cash machines who you are. Experts believe it could replace credit cards and other forms of ID card.

Scott Silverman, chief executive of American company Applied Digital, which plans the first commercial trials of the system, said: 'We believe the market will evolve to use our product.' The chip is implanted just under the loose skin in the forearm in a small operation, using a local anaesthetic. The procedure takes about three minutes and once inserted the chip is invisible to the naked eye.

It is activated when it comes close to a till or cash machine sending out low-power radio waves. Once activated, the chip sends data to the till or ATM - this can be a credit card number, or an employee ID number. Simon Davies, director of human rights group Privacy International, said: 'This is an invasion of privacy. Once this chip is implanted, the only way to stop it would be to undergo a surgical procedure to have the chip removed.' Mastercard has already hinted it may adopt the same radio technology used in the implants. 'Ultimately, this could be embedded in anything,' a spokesman said. American oil company ExxonMobil is testing a system where users wave a key fob in front of a scanner to pay for petrol or for food at hundreds of McDonald's outlets.

HOW THE DEVICE WORKS



(Note: Articles have been edited to fit the space).

VeriChip (now re-branded PositivID) is the only FDA-approved, human-implantable microchip. The rice grain-sized chips contain an RFID chip, which can be scanned like a barcode.

In 2004, the Baja Beach Club in Barcelona was the first outlet to offer the VeriChip for the purpose of buying and selling. It allowed patrons to buy drinks and food with just a "wave of the hand". The club's director, Conrad K. Chase, disclosed that, "The objective of this technology is to bring an ID system to a global level that will destroy the need to carry ID documents and credit cards."

VeriChip's resemblance to the prophecy of a globally-implemented mark used for "buying and selling" is clear, with

promoters needing to counter claims of its similarity to what is described in Revelation 13:16-17. Some technical differences to the "mark of the beast" exist - most notably that, to date, it has traditionally been inserted in the left forearm rather than in the right hand or forehead.

Although marketing of VeriChip was reportedly discontinued in 2010, the technology (and the arguments used to encourage people to accept it) will almost certainly evolve in the years ahead.

One thing is certain: The cashless society is an increasingly viable reality. As one billboard, featuring an advert by Maestro for debit cards, confidently exclaimed: "Cash is so last millennium".

(It is important to realise how RFID chips fit into the overall context of the prophecy about the mark of the beast/cashless society. Microchips used for the sole purpose of tracking are NOT the mark of the beast and many people (often conspiracy-theorists) get side-tracked into paranoid hype about government control etc. which detracts from the real issue - our attachment to the monetary system. The mark of the beast is for buying and selling which is why we need to go to the source of the problem by confronting the root of all evil in our own lives.)

Technology to do all of this has been available for some time. In 1995, it was being tested on "smart cards". Now it is being implanted under the skin on people's arms. (See article on page 139)

First the public had to be weaned away from real-life tellers. They needed to get used to making purchases without money changing hands. They needed to learn to accept big impersonal computers knowing about their spending patterns. They needed to become familiar with scanners and universal product codes which could be used to label every person on earth. And they needed to be conditioned to using their bodies for identification purposes: retina scans, biometric passports, handprints, thumbprints, etc. All of this has been leading up to the microchip implant... the Mark of the Beast.

Microchip implants started out only as identification technology, and they were implanted on the arm... not the hand. America's biggest religious cable TV network officially endorsed the implants, stating that there was no connection between them and the infamous Mark of the Beast.

A mere two years later, the same company (Verichip) started marketing an implant that could be used for buying and selling. The Mark of the Beast is here, and the churches were tricked into endorsing it!

In recent years we have seen the Western world experiment with credit cards, identity cards, phonecards, Fly-Buy cards, eftpos cards, and smart cards. Universal product codes are now on virtually everything we buy. The scene is set for microchip implants.

Sweden could be first country to go cashless as even churches are taking cards for offerings

By Simon Tomlinson

Sweden was the first European country to introduce bank notes in 1661. Now it's come farther than most on the path toward getting rid of them.

In most Swedish cities, public buses don't accept cash - tickets are prepaid or purchased with a cell phone text message.

A small, but growing number of businesses only take cards and some bank offices which make money on electronic transactions have stopped handling cash altogether.

"There are towns where it isn't possible to enter a bank and use cash," complains Curt Persson, chairman of

Sweden's National Pensioners' Organization. He says that's a problem for elderly people in rural areas who don't have credit cards or don't know how to use them to withdraw cash.

The decline of cash is noticeable even in houses of worship, like the Carl Gustaf Church in Karlshamn, southern Sweden, where Vicar Johan Tyrberg recently installed a card reader to make it easier for worshippers to make offerings.

"People came up to me several times and said they didn't have cash, but would still like to donate money," Tyrberg says.

(Daily Mail, March 20, 2012)

For now, the emphasis is just on identification and tracking. Dogs and cats are already being given micro-chip implants that are used to track them if they should become lost. Politicians and industrialists in Italy are accepting them for the same purpose, in case they should ever be kidnapped. Parents in several countries are being encouraged to use implants on their children in case the children become lost or kidnapped.

But the ultimate use for these cards or implants will simply be for buying and selling... just like the prophecy says.

Microchip implants and a cashless society will improve life in many ways. We can have one universal currency. There will be greater control over drug trafficking (which operates on cash changing hands). Robberies of all sorts (except computer crimes) will drop dramatically when there is no longer any cash to steal. People will never have to worry about losing their card, because it will be right there on the back of their hand. All in all, implanting a microchip on every member of the public will make the world far more efficient than it is at the moment.

But the problem for any who take Bible prophecy seriously, is that, along with the prediction that this would happen has come a sombre warning: "If anyone worships the Beast and his image, and receives his mark in their forehead or in their hand, the same will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation. They will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. The smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever. They have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and *whoever receives the mark* of his name." (Revelation 14:9-11)

We know from reading *The Revelation* that a time is coming, a period of at least three and a half years, when everyone will need the mark in order to buy or sell anything. We understand that Christians will not be taken to heaven before this

happens; and it is clear that they will be subject to the wrath of God if they do take the mark. What are you going to do about it, and how are you going to live?

The answer is that you will either give in and take the mark or you will be forced to live by faith.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus urged his followers to consider the birds and the flowers, noting that they didn't have jobs or bank accounts, and yet God took care of them. He said that his Father would take care of us too, if we would just work for his kingdom. (Matthew 6:19-34)

Jesus taught that we should stop working for food (John 6:27) and start working for God. He said that when we spend our time working for (i.e. being a servant of) money, we show our contempt for God. (Luke 16:13) He called on his followers to leave their fishing nets (Matthew 4:18-22), leave their jobs with the government (Luke 5:27-28), and give up everything they own to become his true disciples. (Luke 12:31-33; 14:33) To date, very few people have ever taken any of those teachings seriously. Do you know of any church that teaches people to live like that?

But now, as we move closer and closer to the actual implementation of the Mark of the Beast, Christians who have, in the past, made excuses for not living by faith are going to be forced out of their lukewarm indifference. They will either have to sell their soul to the Antichrist, by taking the mark, or they will finally have to start living by faith, the way Jesus intended for them to be living all along.

This is part of the "bitter" truth of The Revelation. And it's a bitter truth which you need to confront now, before it is too late.

Christians are rapidly being indoctrinated to take the Mark of the Beast, and the indoctrination is coming from some surprising places. The past ten years has seen worldwide interest in an overpriced series of novels supposedly based on Bible prophecy. Well over 100 million copies of books in the "Left Behind" series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins have been read by virtually everyone in Western society who has an interest in Bible prophecy, thus putting the books on the *New York Times* best-seller list.

Yet this same series has subtly undermined the seriousness of the biblical warning against taking the Mark of the Beast in a number of deceptive ways. We will list them below:

1. The secret rapture. The first book in the series says all Christians will supernaturally vanish sometime before the persecution of believers begins. This popular teaching, called 'the secret rapture', implies that present believers will never have to make a choice for or against the Mark.

2. A meaningless mark. When the Mark of the Beast finally gets a mention in the series, it has nothing to do with buying and selling. Consequently, the book's heroes get the best paid jobs, working personally for the Antichrist. Christians are even awarded contracts to do such things as setting up the Antichrist's security and computer systems! The 'mark' itself is a simple tattoo on the forehead (no mention of hands) which Christians can get around by just wearing a baseball cap!

3. Faith in fate. Readers of the series are told that it does not take courage to refuse the Mark; anyone who has said a ritual prayer "asking Jesus into their hearts" will be guaranteed protection from the Mark, without any effort on their part. They can even turn totally against their faith and still they will be saved, because not even God can take back the salvation he has given to them.

4. Biloyalty. After the book has convinced many of its readers that it is impossible for them to take the Mark (because

the ritual prayer has bought them eternal security), it goes on to say that even if they take the Mark, they will not be punished because "nothing can separate us from the love of Christ, and that has to include our own selves."

To prove this, the authors create a subplot where a teenager is physically forced by his parents to take the Mark. One of the book's heroes compliments the boy about the way in which he received the tattoo. He says, "I'm glad you didn't just scream out that you are a believer."

From this apparent tragedy, the book's heroes discover that they have just what they need to continue their life of luxury. They even give this horrible distortion of the truth a name. They call it *bi-loyalty*. The teenager responds, "I love that term *bi-loyal*," and he goes on to show what an advantage having the Mark can be!

And yet, hardly a word of protest has come from the religious masses of the West who are lapping up these damnable lies of the devil!

***For more information related to this chapter, please check out the following video: Survivors Ch. #13 - The Mark (Surviving Without The Implant)**

Appendix, Chapter 18

Matthew 6:26, **31-33**. *Behold the birds of the air, for they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? ... Therefore, take no thought, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "With what will we be clothed?" (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.*

John 6:27. *Do not labour for the food that perishes, but for that food which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of man will give to you. For him has God the Father sealed.*

Luke 16:13. *No servant can work for two masters. Either he will hate one and love the other, or else he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot work for God and mammon [money].*

Matthew 4:18-22. *Jesus... saw two brothers... casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. He said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men," and they straightway left their nets and followed him.*

And going on from there he saw two other brothers... in a ship with their father, mending their nets, and he called them. They immediately left the ship and their father and followed him.

Luke 5:27-28. *He saw a publican... sitting at the receipt of custom, and he said to him, "Follow me," and he left all, rose up, and followed him.*

Luke 12:32-33. *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have and give to the poor. Provide yourselves with bags that do not wax old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches neither moth corrupts.*

Luke 14:33. *Whoever... does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple.*

20. The Beast

Now we will back up and discuss the first half of the thirteenth chapter of *The Revelation*.

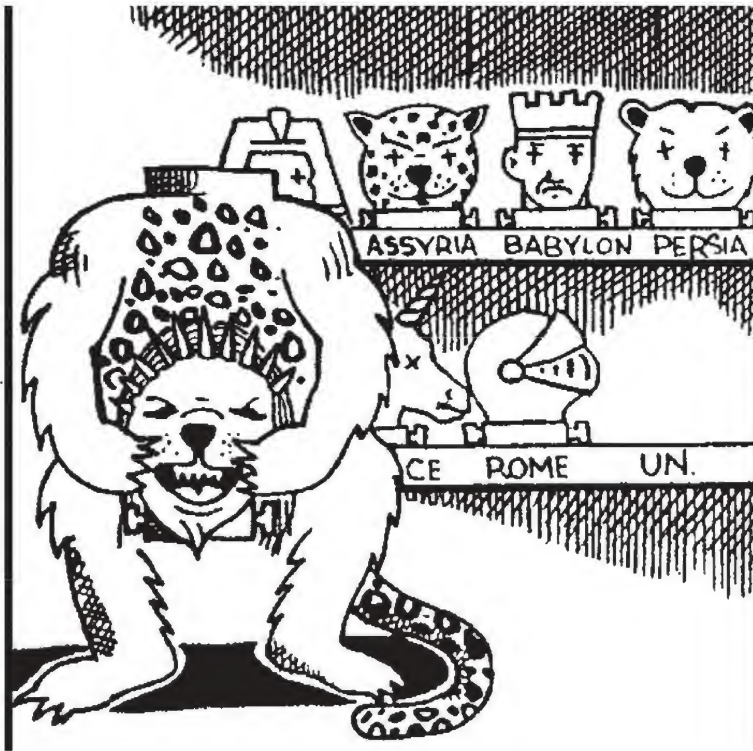
It describes a Beast with seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 13:1), which is a conglomerate of the same animals that Daniel had seen in one of his visions: the panther, bear, lion, and then the final Beast. (Daniel 7:4-7; Revelation 13:2) Notice that there is no reference to the eagle's wings in John's description, although the lion had eagle's wings in Daniel's prophecy. (We will have more to say on that later.)

Some say the beasts Daniel saw were succeeding world empires. Daniel had clearly said this about the statue in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which represented Babylonia, followed by Persia, Greece, Rome, and then one final world empire. Although he said the four beasts were *also* kingdoms, he was not so definite about them each existing in different ages. (Daniel 7:17-18)

There may be some truth in the traditional interpretation, i.e. that the four beasts represented Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome; but why would this have been significant in John's day, when the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek Empires were already history?

We would like to suggest that the bear, lion, and panther might also be references to three world powers (i.e. a First, Second, and Third World) that would exist at the same time, and each become part of the final world empire.

John's "Beast" had seven heads. Little is said about six of them. It is likely that these six heads (which hardly rate a mention) are the part of the vision that represented past world empires. *The Revelation* could have been saying that all those past empires will be spiritually present in the final empire as well. The drawing below suggests that the six past empires were the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires; with one world empire still to come.

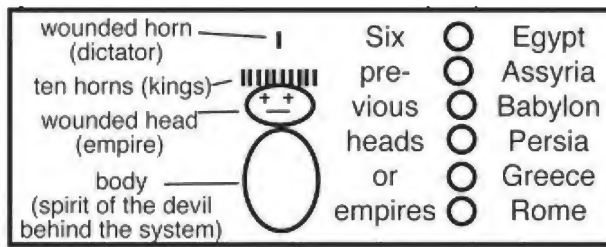


Along with seven heads, the Beast John saw in Revelation 13:1-2 had ten horns. Each horn had a crown. Daniel's "fourth beast" or final world empire, was "dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong, and had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces and stamped the residue with its feet. It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and *it had ten horns.*" (Daniel 7:7)

This seventh head (with ten horns) must be the coming world empire. Daniel said "the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that will arise. Another will rise after them, and he will be diverse from the first. He will subdue three kings." (Daniel 7:24) In John's description, the ten horns are wearing ten crowns, suggesting that these are the same horns that Daniel saw, representing ten "kings" or world leaders. So the coming world empire has ten leaders, and the Antichrist "subdues" three kings in order to take control of it.

In Revelation 13:3, John says that he "saw one of his [the Beast's] heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the Beast." John described the Beast as having seven heads and ten *horns*. But each horn was, in essence, a head as well, because each horn was wearing a crown. Daniel described one horn in particular as having eyes and a mouth. (Daniel 7:8)

So is it a head or a horn that receives the "deadly wound"? Once again, the correct answer may be "both", since the horns are people/leaders too.



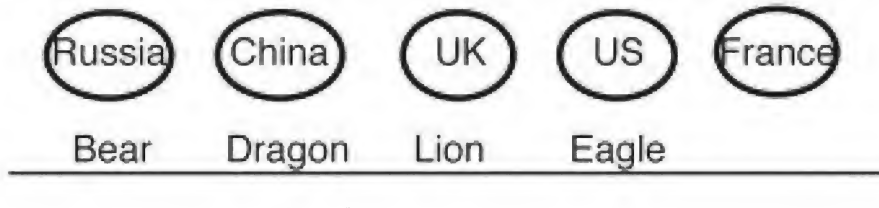
The Revelation says specifically that it is a "head" that receives the deadly wound (and is then revived); but then it goes on to describe the head doing things that Daniel said the *horn* would do. (cf. Revelation 13:3-10 and Daniel 7:8,25) The head is wounded just before the Tribulation, when the Beast makes war against God's people. So we can say with relative certainty that it is the final world empire (head) and/or the final world dictator (horn)

that receives the deadly wound.

Because this last world empire is unique from previous empires (i.e. because it is an alliance), the "head" must either be an organisation or an ideology which unites the ten kings. Let's say that the head is either the United Nations, world communism, or world capitalism. Then one of these must receive a "deadly wound" from which it will miraculously recover, and then take on its full role in the next world empire.

In 1990, I led a delegation of Australians on a tour of the United States, warning that country of impending doom. We distributed a quarter of a million pamphlets entitled, "The Fall of America".

U.N. Security Council--5 permanent members



The pamphlet said that the U.N. Security Council has ten Third World members and five superpower members. Three of the superpowers are prowestern (The U.S., United Kingdom, and France) and two are communist (Russia and China). I said that, if Russia could "subdue" the three Western powers, she could control the world.

The U.S. media gave our delegation excellent coverage, with over 200 reports of our visit. But we had barely left the country when, instead of America falling, communism collapsed. Our timing was perfect; but our declaration of who was going to fall could not have been more wrong! Or so it seemed.

Nevertheless the U.N. is definitely no longer a "paper tiger". It just happens that America is the one pulling the strings, and not Russia, as we had predicted (and as we still do predict).

We warned earlier against letting the media dictate your understanding of Bible prophecy. Communism in general, and Russia in particular, have suffered a deadly wound. That's all. The rest of the prophecy says the deadly wound will be *healed*, and all the world will "wonder after the Beast". (Revelation 13:3) So the collapse of communism does not necessarily rule it out as the unifying ideology for the final world empire.

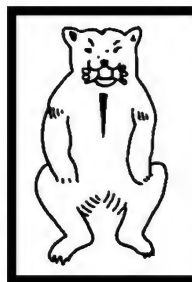
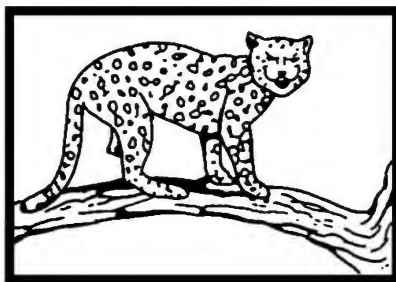
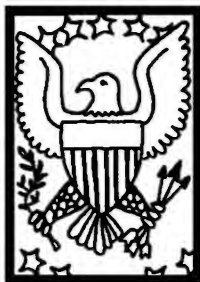
The Bible specifically mentions that the Beast will be helped by a Dragon (Revelation 13:4), which is also described as having seven heads and ten horns.(Revelation 12:3) The Revelation itself states that the Dragon is the Devil (Revelation 12:9); but it is also interesting that the dragon is the symbol of the other great communist power in the world today (China).

We learned from Daniel that a "horn" would "pluck up by the roots" three other horns before taking control of the final Beast. The horn that is going to do that is the same one that is going to "devour and break in pieces". (Daniel 7:7-8)

In the same prophecy, Daniel saw a Bear with three ribs between its teeth, saying "Arise, devour much flesh." (Daniel 7:5) Daniel also saw a beast that was like a Lion with Eagle's wings. But he saw the wings of the eagle "plucked", and the Lion made to stand on its feet as a man. (Daniel 7:4) In other words, the Lion ceased to exist as a "beast", or world power, when it lost its Eagle wings. "Dominion" was given, instead, to the Panther. (Daniel 7:6) Remember the ten Third World members of the U.N. Security Council?

The symbols for Russia, England/America, and the Third World are a Bear, Lion/Eagle, and Panther. Remember, too, that when John saw all of these animals merged into one final Beast, he made no mention of the Eagle. If these animals are referring to political powers that exist in the world today, what could they be implying?

Are they saying (as our newspapers seem to be telling us) that the *Eagle* (America) is the nation that will take (or perhaps already has taken) control of the ten united nations? or are the prophecies saying that the *Bear* (Russia) is going to eventually recover from its deadly wound, "pluck" the eagle's feathers, and, in doing so, subdue three nations that are presently stopping it from taking control of the U.N. and "devouring" the earth? (Daniel 7:24) Obviously the second explanation is the one that conforms with what the prophecies are actually saying. True, it is embarrassing to predict that America will fall, and then to see Russia fall instead. But that too is predicted as part of the overall scenario: Russia/communism must suffer a deadly wound first.



If the final world power is to be a communist power, and if it is to be represented by a bear with three ribs (or horns?) in its teeth, and if the bear is to be assisted by a dragon, and if it is going to unite the Third World in ruling

the world, it certainly is still going to have to "pluck" the Eagle's wings before it can hope to achieve such goals.

The Revelation (written nearly 2,000 years ago) names the same three animals that symbolise the two (former?) superpowers, plus the Third World. What these animals are described as doing (particularly with reference to gaining control of the U.N.) makes perfect sense in the light of what is happening in the world today.

More is said about the Beast in Revelation 17. We will deal with that after we have said a few things about the False Prophet.

***For more information related to this chapter, please check out the following video: Survivors Ch. #2 - Foretold.**

Appendix, Chapter 20

Revelation 13:1-8. I stood on the sand of the sea and saw a Beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads the name of blasphemy. The Beast I saw was like a leopard. His feet were as the feet of a bear. His mouth as the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority.

I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death. His deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the Beast. They worshipped the dragon which gave power to the Beast, and they worshipped the Beast, saying, "Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

There was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. Power was given him to continue forty-two months. He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven.

It was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. Power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations. All that dwell on earth will worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Daniel 7:3-9. Four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I beheld till the wings of it were plucked. It was lifted up from the earth and made stand on its feet as a man. A man's heart was given to it.

Behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear. It raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it. They said thus unto it, "Arise, devour much flesh."

After this I beheld and lo, another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl. The beast had also four heads, and dominion was given to it.

After this I saw in the night visions and behold a fourth Beast, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly. It had great iron teeth. It devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it. It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots. Behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow...

Daniel 7:17-18. These great beasts which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

Daniel 7:23-25. *The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth and shall tread it down and break it in pieces. The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise. Another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first. He shall subdue three kings. He shall speak great words against the most High and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws. They shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time [three and a half years].*

Revelation 12:3. *There appeared another wonder in heaven. Behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads.*

Revelation 12:9. *The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

21. The False Prophet

The False Prophet is only mentioned in a short passage from the thirteenth chapter of *The Revelation*. (verses 11-18) But what we learn here is that it is actually the False Prophet who succeeds in getting the world to worship the Beast and his "image".

The False Prophet is described as looking "like a lamb", but speaking "as a dragon". (Revelation 13:11) He has all the power that the Beast himself has, but his primary role is to teach the world to worship the Beast.

Remember Max Weber's research into religion? (p. 75) Weber discovered that the primary function of all religions has been to teach the masses that society is God. Rather than teach people to worship and serve the Creator, institutional religion has always taught people to worship and serve the System... or the Beast.

This has been happening throughout history. Because of that, the message of The Revelation has always been relevant.

However, in this final age, there appears to be a fulfillment of what Weber observed, which is going to be far more devastating for the spiritual future of the human race. There have been many antichrists, and there have been many false prophets. But there is going to be one supremely evil Antichrist, and one supremely evil False Prophet during the last three and a half years of history as we now know it.

The Bible specifically warns us that the False Prophet will be able to control the masses through his ability to perform what appear to be miracles. (Revelation 13:13-14)

In a prophecy relating to the end of the world, the Apostle Paul talks about the "Man of Sin" and the "Wicked One" coming before Christ returns. He says, in particular, that the Wicked One will come "after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (II Thessalonians 2:2-12) In other words, this Wicked One is going to have the ability to perform what appear to be miracles, but they will actually be "lying" wonders.

Church historians are pretty much in agreement when they say that the biggest thing that has happened in the church world in the Twentieth Century has been the Pentecostal movement, with its emphasis on miraculous "gifts". However, the movement has been characterised by widespread deception and dishonesty. From the mail fraud of Jimmy Bakker to tricks with chicken livers by Jim Jones, the movement has spawned some of the worst abuses of congregational trust that religion has ever experienced.

There is hardly a Pentecostal minister anywhere in the world today who doesn't at least *consent* to the teaching that people should "claim" miracles have happened even when all the available evidence indicates otherwise. The argument in defence of this practice is that "claiming" a miracle, when there is none, shows great faith. However, the result has been that faith healers receive endorsements without having to produce the goods. They usually move on to their next crusade, while leaving the disillusioned to sort out for themselves how they are going to live with the fact that they told a lie about a miracle that never happened.

They told the lie in the first place ("God has healed me! Thank you, Jesus!") in the hope of pressuring God into giving them what they "claimed" had already occurred. That's how the teaching works. When it does not eventuate, most people are too embarrassed to admit the falseness of the whole process. They assume that they are the only ones who didn't get what they had hoped for; and they fear that others will think that their faith was defective if they were not healed; so they say nothing, and the lie grows.

In this tragic illustration of the social phenomenon that Hans Christian Andersen was describing in his story about *The Emperor's New Clothes*, the entire Pentecostal movement has become one big lie, with each person secretly trying to imitate what they hear others saying.

The church world has largely refused to deal decisively with the lie. And it appears to be the same lie that the False Prophet will use to lead the "faithful" to worship the Antichrist.

We are told that the False Prophet will have two horns "like a lamb", but he will have the voice of a dragon. If the horns represent authority, then we can expect he will claim to have the authority of Christ (the Lamb), at the same time that what he says will really reflect the lies of the Devil.

You will not find one church leader in a hundred today who believes in and preaches obedience to the teachings of Jesus. What they teach instead, are cleverly worded doctrines which justify *disobedience* to the teachings of Jesus.

Such men of faith as Gandhi and Tolstoy were appalled to find that the official position of the bulk of "Christianity" is that God neither expects nor even *wants* us to try to be good (in the sense of obeying Christ). The churches do teach rules about church attendance, saying little prayers, performing rituals, and "obeying the laws of the land". But the vast majority of Protestants believe that strict discipline in matters such as Christ taught is an attempt to "work your way to heaven". Trying to work your way to heaven (i.e. trying to be good in an attempt to please God) is seen as the most fundamental of all sins.

It matters not that these teachings totally contradict what Christ said about the need for obedience if one wishes to be counted as one of his followers. In other words, those who claim to be speaking on behalf of Christ (i.e. wearing the horns of the Lamb) are actually spouting *anti*-Christ teachings of the Devil (or the Dragon).

Christ taught that miracles prove nothing about real faith. He said an "evil and adulterous generation" seeks miracles. (Matthew 16:4) Such is the generation that we now live in. Teachings about morality and discipline have been discarded in favour of teachings about how to get health and wealth.

Ironically, the Bible says the False Prophet, working with the Antichrist, will be able to call fire down from heaven (Revelation 13:13); and it says almost the same about the Two Witnesses! (Revelation 11:5) So we will have two teams of two, both calling fire down from heaven. Apparently they will both start out by saying they speak on behalf of Christ (the Lamb). Anyone hoping to tell the good guys from the bad guys on the basis of the miracles that they can perform, will almost certainly be conned into following the bad guys instead.

From experience we have found that true discernment is not based on superficial examination. It looks more deeply than just at whether or not one can do a miracle or talk piously. True discernment only comes from following and obeying the Lamb yourself. As you do this, you will learn personally what he requires of his followers. Based on the teachings of Jesus in the Bible, you will learn to recognise the difference between the Dragon's voice and the Lamb's voice.

The False Prophet "makes an image to the Beast", and "gives life to the image" so that it can speak. This part of the prophecy is a bit baffling if the False Prophet represents the institutional church.

There is another interpretation of the prophecy which says that the institutional church has lost relevance in today's world. It says that the "prophets" of the Twentieth Century are scientists. Science, through television (the image that can speak), now dictates the norms and values of today's society. There is some truth in this, and it is not completely inconsistent with the earlier theory. The mainline churches strongly support the government education system, and science as taught in government schools. The churches, as a whole, have taken the attitude that "if you can't beat them, you may as well join them." Science, with its quest for truth, and education with its free pass to well-paid employment have become the message of the church to today's youth. Never mind that science has made the totally unproven and irrational theory of evolution the centerpiece of its ideology, in an effort to minimise or totally rule out God's role in creation.

And so science, with ecclesiastical blessing, makes an image, according to Revelation 13:15, that keeps track of any who do not worship the Beast (i.e. who do not take or use the Mark). It sounds like a massive computer that keeps tabs on all the millions who show loyalty to the Beast by using his Mark to buy and sell. Those who do not, will be killed... by starvation if by nothing else.

The Revelation's description of Twenty-First Century technology in the form of the "image that can speak" is, indeed, sounding more and more scientific and less and less fictional.

***For more information related to this article, please check out the following video:** Survivors Ch. #19 - Tribulation Force (Resisting The Great Tribulation!) - Apocalyptic Movie

Appendix, Chapter 21

Revelation 13:11-17. *I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon. He exercises all the power of the first Beast before him, and causes the earth and them that dwell in it to worship the first Beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He does great wonders so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives them that dwell on the earth by those miracles that he had power to do in the sight of the Beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the Beast which had the wound by a sword and did live. He had power to give life to the image of the Beast, that the image of the Beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads, that no one might buy or sell save those that had the mark or the name of the Beast or the number of his name.*

2 Thessalonians 2:2-4; 8-12. *Be not soon shaken in mind ... that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God*

sits in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Don't you remember that when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

Then will that Wicked One be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of his coming, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. For this cause God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Matthew 16:4. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks a sign. No sign will be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonah.

Revelation 11:5. If anyone will hurt them [the two witnesses], fire proceeds out of their mouth, and devours their enemies.

Left Behind

Zion Ben-Jonah Writes

The description of the situation on earth prior to the return of Jesus is one of people panicking because he has not turned up at the time when they had been expecting him to come. Jesus warns, in Matthew 24: "If they should say to you, 'Lo here, or Lo there!' go not after them. If they say that he is in the desert, do not go after them. Or if they say that he is in a secret place, do not believe it. For as the lightning is seen from the East to the West, even so will the coming of the Son of Man be." (verses 23-27)

So much for any "secret rapture"!

The real source of the secret rapture doctrine, and a lot of other teachings in the church world today, is one of escapism. It is so easy to deceive ourselves into believing what we want to believe, whether or not it is true. It could be a teaching that we will never be sick, or that we will be prosperous, or that we can go on disobeying Jesus and God will overlook it, or that we will not have to go through the Tribulation. All such teachings are popular, not because they are true, but because they are so appealing. They say what people want to hear.

Unless Christians are able to acknowledge error when it is pointed out (through circumstances if nothing else), they will only replace one form of escapism with an even more bizarre form, in an effort to further escape facing their error.

Survivors

By David Mckay

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Since September 11, 2001

This book was written (and the cover design was laid out) prior to September 11, 2001. Many people have suggested that the subsequent destruction of the World Trade Centre in New York City (pictured on the cover) was fulfillment of prophecies about the destruction of "Babylon". It certainly is symbolic of the destruction of Babylon, but I believe that the real thing is yet to come.

The general thrust of that part of this book's interpretation of Bible prophecy is that tensions will develop between the United States and other forces in the United Nations. Because of an aggressive military agenda and other injustices committed by the United States, other nations of the world will eventually support an all-out military attack against the U.S. This is what we saw predicted in Bible prophecy, and it is what we see shaping up today.

Some Americans may take comfort in the fact that these aggressors against the U.S. are seen in prophecy, and in this book, to be acting as agents of the Antichrist. They will assume that it means the U.S. is correct in its stance. But, ironically, Russia, its allies, and the United Nations will (if our understanding of Bible prophecy is correct) also be acting as God's agents, inflicting a painful lesson on a country which has lost its way spiritually.

We apologise for any offence that this book may cause to people who see good in the United States. Obviously, there is good and bad in any country, and the U.S. is no exception. But we believe that true believers in any country are more concerned about loyalty to God and to His kingdom than they are about issues of patriotism, with their universal tendency to generate wars and war-mongering.

An important theme of this book (and of The Revelation) is the progressive role of Babylon (the Prostitute) throughout history. We have argued that America is the modern-day Babylon.

The authors of the Left Behind series felt it necessary to physically move the final world government to Iraq (the geographical site of the original Babylon) in order to make it clear that it was a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Ironically, the U.S. has now firmly established its control and claim over that part of the world... leaving no doubt that, by whatever criteria one wishes to use, the U.S. still comes up as the modern-day equivalent of Babylon... the Prostitute.

Of course much of this book is conjecture, and the fall of America is only a small part of a much bigger story contained within Bible prophecy. The overall lessons of The Revelation are that no country can take the place of God's invisible kingdom of faith, peace, and love, and that the Lamb's example of laying

down his life for others will eventually prove more powerful than all of the armies of the world.

Remember that as you observe world events unfold.

From Zion Ben-Jonah

My real name is not Zion Ben-Jonah, and the characters in this book are not real people. In fact, the whole story is fiction. Much of what it conveys is total conjecture.

Zion Ben-Jonah is inspired by a character in a series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. In that series, a character named Tsion Ben-Judah sets the world straight at a time when the mass media is monopolised by materialistic forces that seek to distort the truth.

We believe that this is already the situation in the world of religious entertainment. In order for a book to sell in a really big way, certain important truths (truths which are uncomfortable, and hard for the masses to accept) must be left out.

In the tradition of LaHaye's Tsion Ben-Judah, we will include those truths in this account of what we believe is coming to pass shortly, in America and elsewhere around the world.

Almost certainly some of what it predicts will not happen exactly as it is described in this book. This book is not meant to be taken as a prophecy in itself. But it is an attempt to apply the prophecies of the Bible to modern day events. A discerning reader will need to determine what is factual and what is not, as the actual events unfold in the years ahead.

Discovering the whole truth often involves knowing and admitting the limits of our understanding. We are each trapped within the boundaries of our own experience and imagination. No one has total knowledge of all truth except God himself. There will, I believe, be truth in this book which you have never read elsewhere. It is my firm conviction that I have been inspired by God as I have written it. But I (or anyone else) can be inspired in what I (or they) say, without being infallible. If you keep that in mind, you will be able to maintain better perspective as you read through what I have written.

On the other hand, I have a responsibility (as does every other Christian) not to deliberately distort truth for selfish motives. I could (as others have done) make millions of dollars by altering the facts in order to give the public what they want to hear. This book will not do that.

Instead, it will try to tell you what you need to know in order to be prepared for what is almost certainly going to happen on earth in the next few years, whether what it says sells or not. I have done it in story form, but I have also tried to be true to what the Bible actually says about the future, whether it conforms with popular opinion or not. These issues are too serious for anyone to take a chance on leading people astray just to make a few more dollars.

Notes appear at the end of each chapter to help you understand points made in that chapter. Those notes are my comments on the biblical implications of that part of the story.
--David McKay

BOOK ONE

1. Left Behind

Everyone was caught off guard when the trouble began. But no one was more unprepared than those who supposedly knew ahead of time what was to happen.

Rayford Strait was not a believer, so he never expected any of this -- not in his lifetime, nor in anyone else's lifetime. But he was a realist. If circumstances changed (as they had as a result of the attack), then he would simply make the necessary adjustments and set about doing what needed to be done. Which is more or less what he did.

His wife and son, on the other hand, were believers. Irene Strait attended church faithfully, not far from where they lived, in Prospect Heights, Illinois. Vernon Billings, Irene's pastor at New Hope Chapel, often taught about the troubles that were going to come on the earth. He had a shelf full of books and even video tapes detailing what to expect. The topic had become something of an obsession with him.

Irene knew from what she had heard at New Hope Chapel, that a popular world leader was going to arise who would gain control over the entire planet. She had heard that he would persecute believers on a scale never before known. She knew that there would be death and destruction everywhere, and that her own country would not be spared.

Irene had shared much of this with her 13 year old son, Raymie. She tried to share it with her 19-year-old daughter, Chloe, too, but Chloe was -- like her father -- a cynic. She had little interest in anything she could not see and touch.

Raymie found the books, the lectures, and especially the videos exciting. They were scary at times, but he took comfort in the fact that he would never have to go through what they were describing, because he would be whisked up to heaven before it all started... instantly and painlessly... and all because he had said a little prayer asking Jesus into his heart. Raymie faithfully prayed for his father and his sister, that they too would say the prayer before it was too late. If only they would, then they could all go to heaven together.

Irene prayed the same prayer that Raymie prayed, and she prayed it even more faithfully and more fervently than Raymie did. She did not want any member of her family to be left behind. But she never for a moment thought that she or Raymie would be among those who would be left. She had books and

tapes and videos and a long list of religious experts to back her up in her belief that she, and others like her, would be spared.

All of the suffering, she had been told, was reserved for someone else, for someone more appropriately suited to suffering... like the Jews. After all, they have had more practice than the rest of us when it comes to suffering!

Rayford Strait was piloting an early morning flight from London to Chicago on a Tuesday in May when the invasion began. He had left London at 5am and was about halfway to Chicago when he received word from Civil Aviation authorities in Chicago that unauthorised traffic had been picked up on radar in Canada, and it was crossing his proposed flight path. (It was about 3:30am in Chicago by that time.)

At first Rayford had been asked to divert to another corridor, but while they were still communicating the details, another message came through as an all frequencies broadcast. A distraught flight controller was ordering all aircraft passing over the Ice Cap to turn back immediately.

When Rayford asked for an explanation, all he received was a shouted warning: "All flights headed for North America over the Arctic Circle must turn back immediately. This is a matter of extreme urgency. It has come from the American Civil Defence headquarters in Washington, D.C. I repeat: Turn back! Do not attempt to land in North America!"

Unidentified aircraft had come like a swarm of bees from the north, over the Ice Cap and across Canada. With them had come missiles... hundreds (if not thousands) of them, flying high above the aircraft and coming down to earth just moments before the bombers crossed into U.S. airspace. Each missile had been programmed to hit a particular U.S. city or a strategic military target. Some were intercepted, of course, but on the whole the highly sophisticated American missile defence system had proved to be helpless in the face of so much fire-power and with so little warning.

The enemy missiles were each surrounded by a cluster of metallic balloons, which served to confuse tracking devices on the American anti-missile missiles. Nine out of ten of America's defence weapons totally missed their marks. And while American missiles were busily tracking other missiles, many of the enemy planes were able to sneak safely into U.S. airspace as well. What the missile invasion did not destroy, the enemy bombers took care of.

Although the general public had been conned into believing that America had an effective defence against an attack like this, military intelligence in almost every other country of the world knew better. But they also knew that nothing could stop America from pressing the button and sending its entire arsenal out to do the same thing to any other country that would dare to attack the U.S. By doing this, the United States could at least wipe their opponents out as they themselves were going down. This threat of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD, as it was called, for short) and not the highly touted missile defence system, had been the one thing that had kept the peace for as long as it had.

But now that the threat of nuclear attack had become a reality, the American system found itself either too unwieldy, too timid, or perhaps too sane to do to an enemy nation what was being done to itself. Someone in charge of

pushing the button apparently realised, too late, that such a move would be pointless. It would not bring back to life the millions of Americans who died that night, and it would only double the suffering for the human race.

In Prospect Heights, Illinois, where Rayford Strait's family was sleeping, the air raid sirens went off several minutes before the first missiles hit, at 4am on Tuesday. But people had grown complacent about such things, ever since the Cold War had ended, and especially since communism had suffered such total defeat in the 1990's. The U.S. fallout shelter program was totally scrapped in 1992, and air raid drills were widely regarded as unnecessary, especially when they chose to go off in the middle of the night.

People in Prospect Heights, like people throughout the rest of the country, mostly rolled over in their beds, and either slept through the first impact or else never knew what hit them.

But Irene Strait was not like everyone else. She lived by the book, and if there was to be an air raid drill, then she would do the right thing by her country. She roused her family and they all trundled down to the basement, despite protests from both Chloe and Raymie.

On their way, Raymie grabbed what he thought was his latest hand-held video game lying on the kitchen counter. If he was going to be locked in the cellar for a while, he may as well have something to play with.

When they reached the basement, Irene turned on the transistor radio that she always kept there. She quickly picked up the special Civil Defence broadcast.

It was just dawning on the trio who sat huddled around the radio, that this was not a drill, when they heard and saw the first explosion. Downtown Chicago was some twenty miles south of them. When the first nuclear warhead hit it, they not only heard the explosion, but they also felt the rumble in the ground. The darkened basement lit up from the flash coming through two small street-level windows. The windows themselves shook from the shock waves. A short while later, they heard several smaller explosions, with at least one of them coming from O'Hare International Airport, just six miles away, where a bomber had dropped a smaller bomb to destroy the runways.

The Strait family did not know it at the time, but one of those explosions came from a one megaton warhead that veered off course and landed between De Kalb and Dixon, some eighty miles west of them. It had been intended for a target just north of Prospect Heights. If it had landed as planned, their house would almost certainly have been destroyed, and if they had survived the blast, they would have been so badly burned from radiation that they would not have lived for more than a few days.

While they sat relatively safely in their basement, literally millions of Americans were being incinerated. Millions more were receiving burns and other injuries from which they would never recover.

"What's happening?" Irene said to herself in bewilderment, as she ran her hands through her hair.

"Are we being bombed?" asked Raymie. "It can't be the end of the world," he added, as if trying to reassure himself. "It can't be; we're s'posed ta be gone before that happens. It's not the end, is it, Mom?"

"I don't know, Raymie," Irene responded, with exasperation showing in her voice. "I've got to think."

"Quiet, you two," said Chloe, who had her ear pressed up against the radio. "They're saying that Russia has launched an attack. The missiles are from Russia. They say our defence system will stop the bombs before they reach their targets."

"Yeah, tell that to whoever just copped that last one!" said Raymie. "Bet it hit Chicago! Now we're gonna die too. We're gonna die; and what's God doing about it? He isn't doing anything, is he? Why, Mom? Why?" Raymie's voice was becoming more hysterical as the seriousness of the situation dawned on him.

"Settle down, Raymie! We need to pray," said Irene.

"Yeah, sure! We need to pray," he almost whispered sarcastically to himself. "We already did pray, and it was s'posed ta make us safe from all of this. I should be in heaven right now." He turned to Irene. "What went wrong, Mom? Why didn't we go? We're just as good as the others. How come they got raptured and we didn't?"

"We don't know that they did get raptured," said Raymie's mother. "Maybe the rapture hasn't happened yet."

"Well, what's the point, if we're still gonna hafta go through this?"

Chloe interrupted again. "Will both of you shut up? We're lucky to be alive right now. But it's not over yet. We need to act quickly."

Just then, the cellar lights went out.

"There should be some candles in that cupboard over the workbench," said Irene. "At least that's where we used to keep them."

Chloe felt her way over to the bench and opened the door on the overhanging cupboard. Not only were there candles, but there were matches too. She silently prayed that they would still light, and after a couple of strikes they had a reassuring flame perched on the workbench.

She turned to her younger brother. "Raymie, turn the faucet on and fill up the laundry tub with water. Quickly!" Chloe, like her father, was the pragmatist. She could see that decisions needed to be made, and she was making them. Her urgency jerked Raymie out of his wailing complaints, at least for a while.

"Mom, stay by the radio and see if they tell us anything more," Chloe said, and then addressed herself: "I need to find a way to cover those two windows as quickly as possible. There's a lot of radiation up there, and it's going to be around for quite a while."

Chloe found a hammer and some nails on an old work bench. She pulled boards off an orange crate and tacked them up in front of the two under-sized windows high up on the wall. There was still some coal in the corner of the old coal bin, and she stuffed as much of that as she could between the glass and the timber slats, in the hope that the coal would soak up some of the radiation. By

the time she finished, she was covered with soot. But there was no time for cleaning up.

"Raymie, what's happening with the water?" she asked.

"I filled the laundry tub and a bucket. There's nothing else to put it in."

"What about empty paint cans? Tip the paint out somewhere if you have to. We need to fill every available container, no matter how dirty it is."

Raymie went back to work looking for containers and muttering to himself about how no one would ever catch him drinking water from a dirty old paint can. "The paint's probably worse for me than not having any water at all," he said.

"There're only a couple dozen candles, and two boxes of matches," Chloe said, loudly enough for the others to hear. "We need to ration the candles and the water."

"What're we gonna eat?" asked Raymie.

"Nothing... at least not for a while. It's too dangerous to go upstairs. In a few days we may be able to make a quick trip to the fridge and grab something."

"In a few days?" wailed Raymie, who had tipped nails and screws out of some empty cans and was filling the cans with water.

"Yes, in a few days. It won't kill us."

Irene was not listening. She was fervently praying that God would do something to bring meaning to all of this. She prayed that he would protect them, that Rayford would be safe, and that she would be able to contact Pastor Billings. That was when she saw the cell phone.

Raymie had accidentally grabbed it, thinking it was a hand-held video game. She picked it up and started dialling. She thanked God that they had paid extra for the microwave satellite function. The Billingses had a satellite phone too. Hopefully she would be able to get a call through to them.

"Pastor Billings! Is that you?," she said when Vernon Billings picked up the receiver on his end of the line. "This is Irene Strait. What's happening? Please tell me!"

"Trust God, Sister Strait," said the kindly old pastor. "Everything's gonna be all right. He knows what he's doing."

"But the country... it's being bombed!" said Irene. "This isn't how it was supposed to happen. We were supposed to be raptured. Is this the end of the world or what?"

"Believe me, Sister. It's all under control", replied Pastor Billings. "I was on the phone to a Christian militia movement in Montana just last night. They said the Lord has actually appeared to them out there. Yes, really! It's not quite how we expected it to happen, but we have to flow with the Spirit, Sister. God is calling his people from all over America to make their way to Montana. I refused to believe it myself; but that was last night. Now I'm thinking differently."

There was silence on Irene's end of the phone as the pastor paused to let her respond. "Are you with me, Sister Strait?" he asked.

"Uh, yeah, sure. I'm with you," Irene replied hesitantly.

Pastor Billings continued. "We may escape this thing yet, Sister. But you'll have to be obedient. Elaine and I are praying about it now, and we want

you to do the same. The Lord has spared us for a purpose. He's coming for us, Irene, you can be sure of that. We just had a few of the details wrong."

"A few of the details?!" said Chloe, when Irene recounted her conversation a minute or two later. "The destruction of America is one hell of a big detail!"

"Watch your language," Irene cautioned. She should have known from past experience that such a warning would not stop her strong-willed daughter. Even bothering to make such a correction was out of character for Irene, who tended to let her children do what they liked.

"I'm sorry, Chloe," Irene said quickly. "It's all the pressure." And then she looked at her daughter in the light of the candle, with soot all over her face, and she longed once again for her to accept Jesus. Tears began to flow as she spoke, "This may be your last chance, honey. Wouldn't you like to get right with the Lord now, so that you can go with us?"

"I'm not going with anyone until I'm sure that it's safe out there," said Chloe. And then she added, "You aren't seriously thinking of going with him, are you? You'll get yourself killed!"

"What else are we supposed to do?" asked Raymie. "Just sit here and starve to death?"

Chloe shared her brother's frustration, but she did not let on. "What we need to do is sit here and listen to the radio. Civil Defence knows what's best. They said radiation is at its worst for the first 24 hours after the explosion. It could be suicidal to go out there now. Someone may come and rescue us. Or they may decide that it's safe for us to come out after a while. We just have to keep our heads and not panic. What they're saying now is for people to find shelter and wait."

Just then the phone rang. Irene picked it up. It was Rayford.

"Irene, I'm sorry to bother you at such an odd hour. I was worrying about you."

"Oh Rayford! It's awful! Chicago has been bombed, and some other cities too... No, seriously! It's on the radio... We're not hurt, just hiding in the basement... Are you okay? ... When will you be home? ... London? Why London? ... But you will be back tonight, won't you? ... Oh, this is awful! Just awful! ... Yes, I understand. ... I'll try. Do you have any idea how long you might be? ... I can't hear you. Your voice is breaking up... Oh dear, I've lost him."

Pan Continental, the airlines for which Rayford flew, had been the first to experiment with microwave satellite equipment on transatlantic flights. It was only good for a short, specified distance on each flight, but it meant that pilots had one more window through which to receive important information on long, lonely flights. Rayford had obviously used some of his precious satellite time to contact Irene.

Irene turned to the children. "Daddy couldn't land because of the bombs. He's on his way back to London. At least he's safe, and he knows we are too."

Zion Ben-Jonah Writes:

There is disagreement over whether Christians will be taken to heaven before the Great Tribulation, or after. Both sides agree: (1) That the seven 'trumpets' in chapters 8-10 of The Revelation refer to events that take place during the period called "The Great Tribulation"; and (2) That I Corinthians 15:51-52 is talking about what is called the "Rapture" -- when Christians will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air at his return. We need to study these passages to find the answer to the question about which comes first.

I Corinthians 15:51 says that the Rapture will take place "at the sounding of the last trumpet". So when would that be? Before or after the seven trumpets of the Tribulation? Easy, isn't it?

Jesus himself says that "immediately after the tribulation of those days", God will send his angels to gather together those who believe in him, so that they can meet him as he returns to earth. (Matthew 24:29-31)

Teaching that Christians do not have to go through the Tribulation is popular, because it is what people want so badly to hear. But it is not supported by scripture. It is a false hope.

The real question in this debate is this: "What are the comparative risks involved in each approach?" Anyone bracing for the worst would not have a problem if proved wrong. But someone looking for an early escape would be in great despair if their theory proved unreliable.

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2. Foretold

The control towers were in chaos, both at Gatwick and at Heathrow... in fact, all over Europe, as they tried to deal with so many returning flights. On his headphones in the cockpit of the big 747, Rayford Strait had been able to pick up something about a charter flight missing off the coast of Scotland. It had run out of fuel while trying to get back to England. There was no telling what had become of the many flights which would not have had enough fuel to make it back to Europe. They would have been forced to put down somewhere in North America, with or without airport runways. There must have been dozens of crashes.

When Rayford had landed and walked into the airport, he started to get a clearer picture of the enormity of the problem. Amidst the pandemonium of flight cancellations and unscheduled arrivals, the airport was abuzz with talk about a huge pre-emptive military strike against the United States, by Russia. It was 2pm in London, but only 8am in Chicago. The sun had not even come up on the West Coast of America yet, and it would be a few hours before any video coverage would be available, but every news station in the world was interrupting its normal programming to give sketchy first reports of the disaster.

Early estimates put the deaths at five million. Later reports would verify that the loss in human life was already several times that figure, and it would almost double over the next few weeks.

Damage to cities, highways, and airports meant that reconstruction was out of the question... even if there had been no nuclear fallout to worry about. The entire country was without government, without power, without communication, and without vital transportation links. The central business district of nearly a hundred major American cities had been entirely wiped out. If the attack had not come in the middle of the night, the loss in human lives would have been several times higher.

Hospitals in the inner cities had been destroyed, and along with them had gone their entire on-duty medical staffs. What medical and rescue services were still available had to function almost without administration, and that was assuming that the rescue personnel themselves were still alive and able to work. America was suddenly back in the middle ages; everyone was being forced to fend for themselves to survive.

Emergency services throughout the English-speaking world were quick to start marshalling forces to airlift rescue supplies, protective clothing, and medical personnel to America, Mexico, and Canada. The wounded would need to be treated as quickly as possible, although for many hundreds of thousands, even treatment would not save them. Those who were already dead would most likely be left where they were.

There were mixed feelings from the non-English-speaking world. Everyone was, of course, shocked. But U.S. President Gerald Fitzhugh had made many enemies with his growing military involvement in world affairs. He had conducted numerous wars of 'liberation', supposedly aimed at wiping out 'terrorism'. His closest aides swore that he genuinely believed he was doing God's will. They said that he experienced personal pain at the civilian casualties that he had caused, but that he felt it was necessary in order to create a kind of holy world peace.

Xu Dangchao, from Tibet, had been elected Secretary General of the United Nations one year earlier, two years after Tibet had been admitted to the world body, and three years after the U.N. headquarters had been shifted to Geneva. Although Dangchao's policies were wildly popular with Russia and with the Third World, his hands had been tied because of America's veto power in the U.N. Security Council. Dangchao wanted to erase the Third World debt and to do away with prejudicial import/export duties, which had the effect of favouring rich nations and further crippling the poorer ones. America's weak justification for opposing the scheme was just that Dangchao was trying to do "too much too soon".

Russia and China, who strongly backed Dangchao, were as stubborn as America about vetoing American proposals for military intervention in countries where the U.S. believed human rights were being abused. But the U.S. had ways of working around a veto from either Russia or China. It used its wealth and military might to form military alliances, with which it could wage wars on its own.

Sadly, President Fitzhugh found that the more he had played God with the future of countries he saw as being "evil", the easier it had become to justify interference even when atrocities committed by the side he was helping were worse than those by the ones he was committing America to destroy.

Of course the American public had lapped it all up. The important thing, politically, was that Fitzhugh had not lost a single skirmish while he had been in office. As long as he was careful to target small revolutionary movements and relatively weak countries, and then to hit them hard, he was almost guaranteed success. Troops would no sooner return triumphant from one conflict than he would be sending out more to settle another. Americans were more proud than ever to be Americans. They truly saw themselves as the saviours of the world. And President Fitzhugh, with his claim to being "born again", never missed an opportunity to remind voters that God was on his side.

But now, with America in the throes of death, Russia, China, and their hero, Dangchao, had nothing to fear either from Fitzhugh, or from Britain or France -- the other two permanent members of the Security Council. (France had been distancing itself from the U.S. anyway.) It appeared that all three of the dissenting nations had been subdued in the space of just a few hours!

* * *

Rayford was told to get some sleep, but to stay in touch with the airport, so that he could be called in if his plane was needed for a mercy mission. All commercial flights to the U.S. had been cancelled. The British government had already declared a state of emergency. This meant that the British military would take command of all local airlines and all local airline pilots. Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and many European nations were making similar moves to assist. Supplies urgently needed to be flown to North America, and refugees needed to be flown out. The entire population of the U.S. was about to be evacuated ... at least what remained of it.

There had been no reports of damage in Canada, apart from a couple of hits in unpopulated regions, and these were apparently caused by defective missiles. It seemed that Russia's war had been only with the U.S., not with Canada.

England, Australia, and other countries that were sympathetic with America, had also escaped without a hint of attack. So airports in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec, and Vancouver were being geared up for round-the-clock arrivals and departures. Rayford, along with all other available pilots, would be playing an important part in the rescue operation.

Although he was tired from the trip, there was too much happening for Rayford to sleep straight away. He checked into the Airport Hilton, then laid on the bed fully clothed. He stared at the ceiling in the same state of shock that so much of the world was in at that very moment. He thought about Irene, about Chloe, and about Raymie. His concerns turned only briefly to other relatives in the U.S. who may have been hit.

Telephone communication with the U.S. was virtually impossible because so many lines had been knocked out. Even satellite phones were being affected by the fallout. Fortunately, Rayford had bought Irene a microwave satphone, so that he could call her from the cockpit when passing through the relatively narrow band on the Pan-Con route from London to Chicago. That would now be his main link with her. He would probably be able to give her another call on his flight back to Canada.

Images of how it must have been for the millions who had already died haunted Rayford. His thoughts returned to Irene and the kids down in the basement. There was comfort in knowing that they, at least, were still alive. With any luck, he would be talking to them within the next 24 hours. He silently thanked God for that. In time, he hoped to be able to find a way to get rescuers to the house, so they could take his family to safety.

Late that afternoon, after a few hours of fitful sleep, Rayford awoke, showered, then left word at the hotel desk that he was taking a cab to the airport. He figured airline officials could tell him more about what was happening than he would be able to learn from any other news source.

A visit to the airline offices above the departure lounge revealed that Rayford had been assigned to fly out at six the next morning, on a flight to Toronto. There would be only a few passengers (mostly doctors and nurses), but the plane would also carry tents, medical supplies, food, and radiation-proof clothing. They were already being loaded in a special hangar at the south end of the airport.

Rayford further learned that, when word had begun to spread, only hours after the bombing had stopped, that Canada had not been hit, this had started a mass northern exodus from the United States. The northern highways were already packed with people fleeing the scene. Canadian authorities were frantically trying to set up refugee camps to contain them.

Fortunately it was nearly summer, so thousands of people were quickly accommodated outside, near Canada's border with the U.S. This left churches and school auditoriums free to be turned into hospitals for the wounded. Helicopters and land rescue vehicles started almost immediately to ferry the wounded out of the northern states; but even then they were only able to service a few of the worst-hit cities. Vancouver was caring for the wounded from Seattle, Portland, and Spokane; Toronto was taking survivors from Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo; and Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec were doing what they could to help refugees from the area that included Boston, Rochester, Philadelphia, and New York City.

At the same time, Canadians themselves were panicking about the fallout that was headed their way. Airports in all of the major cities were packed with passengers waiting for stand-by seats out of the country. Hundreds of flights which would have normally been destined for the U.S. were quickly rerouted to Canada, where airlines could be guaranteed to fill every seat, regardless of what they charged or where their destination was to be. Officials from Emergency Preparedness Canada were frantically trying to set up priority criteria for determining who should be allowed to take the first flights out of the country.

A TV in the Heathrow VIP lounge updated viewers on how many U.S. cities and airports had been demolished. Aircraft were still able to come and go from some smaller airstrips. But that would not be enough to meet the far more urgent needs of the larger cities -- cities like Chicago -- which were the ones that had suffered the greatest losses. Milwaukee and St. Paul/Minneapolis, both closer to Canada than Chicago, were on their own in providing transport to the refugee camps being set up by their northern neighbours.

President Gerald Fitzhugh and his family were believed to be trapped beneath the capital building in Washington, D.C., where they had been rushed to shelter as soon as the alert went up. If a bomb had landed close enough to bring down the White House (which appeared to be the case), then escape for those beneath it would not be easy.

People who had survived the bombing were being told via radio broadcasts to seek shelter and to await further instructions. There would be attempts to relocate them to places away from the fallout; but first the authorities needed to establish exactly where that might be. Weather reports before the attack showed a cold front moving southeast across the Midwest. The fallout cloud would, therefore, be likely to move in that direction. However this was only good news for people on the American West Coast, because for every cloud moving away from other localities, there was another coming toward them from the west.

With nuclear strikes in San Diego, Anaheim, L.A., Fresno, Sacramento, Oakland, San Francisco, Portland, Eugene, Tacoma, Seattle, and Spokane, states on the West Coast were amongst the most heavily hit anyway. Only the area between Boston and Washington had been more heavily hit.

Rayford could see from the first film footage of refugees heading for Canada, that he and his family would not have much chance of reunion through that route. Both sides of the freeways were being used for northbound traffic, which was at a standstill in places and only creeping along in others. Traffic had to detour around major cities and other badly damaged roads. Against such a flow of traffic, only emergency vehicles had any hope of travelling south.

The freeways themselves were becoming increasingly blocked by vehicles without fuel, which had to be pushed to the side of the road and deserted. That left the drivers and passengers of those vehicles to venture forward on foot. Days out on the road would mean days more exposed to the deadly fallout. Civil Defence warned against trying to escape before it could be established that there was someplace safe to go. But millions took no heed.

Chicago was too far away from Toronto to attract Toronto's limited rescue resources. But some local authorities in the Chicago area were commandeering aircraft, vehicles, and even ships to ferry survivors north. Everyone working on rescue operations was putting themselves at risk, and protective clothing was urgently required.

Rayford took some consolation in knowing that, even if he could not get to his own family, he would be helping the overall rescue effort. In time, his involvement might give him the opening that he needed to help Irene and the kids as well.

At about 7pm, Rayford left the VIP lounge and headed for the cab rank. He had learned as much as he could, and now it was time to get a few more hours of sleep before his departure. On the way out of the airport lobby, he was approached by a slim, blond man, in his thirties. The shabbily dressed man stuck a booklet in Rayford's face and asked in a broad German accent if he wanted to read it. "The Fall of America" was the title. It appeared above a picture of an upside-down American flag. Rayford pushed the man aside in disgust.

"Always someone ready to cash in on the sufferings of others"! he thought to himself. But just as he walked out the door of the airport, it hit him: The attack had only taken place a few hours ago! How could someone in England already have produced a booklet telling about it? He raced back into the airport, his eyes searching in every direction for the man. The little German was near the Pan-Con ticket counter, talking to two or three other people, who also appeared to be sending him away.

"Where did you get that? Who wrote it?" Rayford whispered almost at the level of a shout, when he had caught the man's attention by grabbing his arm. He was trying hard not to create a scene, and yet he was desperate to know what was going on.

"Some friends... together, vee wrote it," the man replied, half in fear. "You are interested?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm interested!" said Rayford emphatically. "Very interested. But first tell me how you knew it was going to happen."

"Vee study Bible prophecy," said the softly-spoken little man. "And vee pray. Vee have been saying zat zis vould happen. Vee have been saying it for few years now. It is most imperative zat you read zis book." His brow was wrinkled in an almost exaggerated show of seriousness. But then, how could anyone possibly exaggerate the seriousness of what had just happened in America?

The young German went on dramatically: "Udder sings are coming too... Ferry serious sings."

Rayford wanted to read the book; but he also wanted some instant answers. He offered the man -- Reinhard was his name -- a meal, if he would sit down and talk to him.

"It is most important zat I get zese books to zuh people," replied Reinhard. "Vee can talk later."

"Please!" Rayford begged, almost in tears now. "I'll be flying to Canada tonight. My family is over there. I must know what is going on before I leave."

Reinhard sensed an urgency in Rayford's voice that he must not have found in his other clients, because he quickly backed down. "Vere do you vant to talk?" he asked.

Rayford took him to a table in the nearest restaurant, ordered a meal for them both and then opened the floor for Reinhard to explain what was going on.

"Vat is happening now... it is yudgement from God on America. But it is also opening for Russia to control zee United Nations. Dangchao is Russia's man, you understand?" Rayford knew of the growing unrest throughout the world

at what many countries considered was America's abuse of power within the U.N. That much of Reinhard's explanation made sense, but it was not what he was looking for.

"Are you telling me that you knew this was going to happen just from reading the Bible?" he asked incredulously.

"I cannot show all vat you vish to know in such short time. You vill read it in zuh book."

In his clipped German manner, Reinhard's promise sounded more like a command. "You vill see for yourself. For now, vee have little time. I must move quickly. Zuh Bible tells of five vorld powers. Zay are a bear, an eagle, a lion, a leopard, and a rooster. Zese are signs for Russia, America, England, Africa, and France." He counted them off on his fingers. "You must know, zee leopard is being now used as sign of solidarity for zuh Sird Vorld."

Rayford was finding it difficult to follow, but he decided to let Reinhard carry on.

"England, France, and America can veto plans by Russia and China in zee United Nations. Zee udder ten Security Council members... zay are called rotating members... Zay come from zee udder countries."

"So?" said Rayford, who was showing only mild interest at this stage. He had other questions that he wanted to ask, but he would wait a bit longer.

Reinhard went on. "Zee eagle's vings are plucked. You vill see it in the book. It is in the Bible. Zis bombing, it is zee plucking of zee eagle's vings. After falls zee eagle, zuh lion... zat is, England... loses its power. Zuh rooster vings, zay join vit zuh leopard. Zat is France and all of Europe joining vit zuh Sird Vorld. You see, it is because zuh bear... Russia... subdues... Zat is to say she stops Sree vorld powers from fighting against her. She does it by plucking zuh vings of zee eagle. Vit help from zee udder ten nations zuh new leader vill control zuh vorld."

Rayford was losing patience. "I'm not interested in all the political stuff," he said. "Do you have any answers? My family is over there. If you really know what is going on, what can I do for them? What should I do?"

"It is God's punishment," Reinhard said soberly. "If your people are alive, zay vill be forced to leave. No one vill live zair ever again. God ist angry vit zuh shurch people in America."

"The church people?" Rayford said with genuine surprise. "Why the church people?" He was thinking of Irene.

"Zay fight zuh teachings of sheesus. Zay do not prepare for vat is coming, and day do not tell the truth to udders."

"My wife is a church person," Rayford responded indignantly. "She was always talking about this... this... something called 'The Great Tribulation'."

"No, no! Zis is not Great Tribulation... not yet," said Reinhard. "Zis is only zuh start of vat is coming. But your vife, she needs faith vat is strong enough to go through zuh Great Tribulation. I do not sink she vill find it in zuh shurches."

"She doesn't need to go through it... least not the way she tells it," Rayford replied. He was surprised to hear himself defending something he had always scoffed at. "She says that she will be taken to heaven before it happens."

"And did she tell you zat America vas going to be punished before she goes to heffen?" Reinhard asked quietly, as he stared at his lap. When Rayford did not answer immediately, Reinhard raised his head, and then his blond eyebrows in further anticipation.

Rayford finally spoke. "Well, I don't know. I don't recall her saying anything about that." Even as he spoke, he was thinking about how emotional Irene had been on the phone. "Maybe she missed that part."

"She vill need help ... spiritual help," Reinhard said sympathetically. He went on slowly, as though talking to himself: "It is so ferry hard for the shurch people... Zay cannot say ven zay are wrong." Then he looked Rayford directly in the eyes, and spoke slowly and deliberately, his own eyes opening wide as he spoke. "You must not let her run away. She vill vant to run off and find her Sheesus."

Rayford did not like hearing his wife talked about in such a way at a time when he was so close to losing her. He would take the time to study Reinhard's book more closely later, but he was not getting any information from this strange little man that would help him in his present situation. So he excused himself and left Reinhard to finish his meal alone.

Rayford wondered as he glanced back at the skinny little street preacher wolfing the last of the food down, just how long it had been since Reinhard's last meal.

Zion Ben-Jonah Writes:

Predictions about the fall of America are mostly based on Daniel 7:1-7 and Revelation 13:1-2. Daniel's prophecy is usually assumed to be about the original Babylonian Empire (represented by a Lion with Eagle wings), the Persian Empire (represented by a Bear), the Greek Empire (represented by a Leopard with four chicken wings), and the Roman Empire (represented by a horrible 'Beast' that devours the whole earth). And yet these same symbols apply to four of the five members of the U.N. Security Council. (The symbol for the fifth member, China, is a Dragon.) Only the Leopard (or Panther) is not a prominent national symbol today, except as a symbol for Africa, militant Blacks, or, perhaps, the Third World.

In Revelation 13:2, a future world power is described which has attributes of all the animals listed in Daniel 7, except the Eagle. The Eagle, apparently, no longer exists at that time!

There are ten rotating members of the U.N. Security Council, taken from the rest of the world. The Bible says that with the help of ten "kings" a resurrected world power will destroy another world power described as a Prostitute... who rules over world trade. (Revelation 17:1-5, 12-16) And her name is "Babylon".

The Encyclopedia Britannica lists only one city in the modern world which is named "Babylon". It is located on Long Island, in New York City, not far from the New York Stock Exchange!

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The Fall of America

Zion Ben-Jonah Writes:

Predictions about the fall of America are mostly based on Daniel 7:1-7 and Revelation 13:1-2. Daniel's prophecy is usually assumed to be about the original Babylonian Empire (represented by a Lion with Eagle wings), the Persian Empire (represented by a Bear), the Greek Empire (represented by a Leopard with four chicken wings), and the Roman Empire (represented by a horrible 'Beast' that devours the whole earth). And yet these same symbols apply to four of the five members of the U.N. Security Council. (The symbol for the fifth member, China, is a Dragon.) Only the Leopard (or Panther) is not a prominent national symbol today, except as a symbol for Africa, militant Blacks, or, perhaps, the Third World.

In Revelation 13:2, a future world power is described which has attributes of all the animals listed in Daniel 7, except the Eagle. The Eagle, apparently, no longer exists at that time!

There are ten rotating members of the U.N. Security Council, taken from the rest of the world. The Bible says that with the help of ten "kings" a resurrected world power will destroy another world power described as a Prostitute... who rules over world trade. (Revelation 17:1-5, 12-16) And her name is "Babylon".

The Encyclopedia Britannica lists only one city in the modern world which is named "Babylon". It is located on Long Island, in New York City, not far from the New York Stock Exchange!

The Rapture

Zion Ben-Jonah Writes

There is disagreement over whether Christians will be taken to heaven before the Great Tribulation, or after. Both sides agree: (1) That the seven 'trumpets' in chapters 8-10 of The Revelation refer to events that take place during the period called "The Great Tribulation"; and (2) That I Corinthians 15:51-52 is talking about what is called the Rapture -- when Christians will be caught up to meet Jesus in the air at his return. We need to study these passages to find the answer to the question about which comes first.

I Corinthians 15:51 says that the rapture will take place "at the sounding of the last trumpet". So when would that be? Before or after the seven trumpets of the Tribulation? Easy, isn't it?

Jesus himself says that "immediately after the tribulation of those days", God will send his angels to gather together those who believe in him, so that they can meet him as he returns to earth. (Matthew 24:29-31)

Teaching that Christians do not have to go through the Tribulation is popular, because it is what people want so badly to hear. But it is not supported by scripture. It is a false hope.

The real question in this debate is this: "What are the comparative risks involved in each approach?" Anyone bracing for the worst would not have a problem if proved wrong. But someone looking for an early escape would be in great despair if their theory proved unreliable.



Trump transcript in full: Jerusalem is Israel's capital

President [Donald Trump](#) has announced that the US formally recognises Jerusalem as the capital of [Israel](#) and will begin the process of moving its embassy to the city, breaking with decades of US policy.

Here is the transcript of that announcement, made in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House on Wednesday, December 6.

"When I came into office, I promised to look at the world's challenges with open eyes and very fresh thinking. We cannot solve our problems by making the same failed assumptions and repeating the same failed strategies of the past. Old challenges demand new approaches.

My announcement today marks the beginning of a new approach to conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

In 1995, Congress adopted the Jerusalem Embassy Act, urging the federal government to relocate the American embassy to Jerusalem and to recognise that that city - and so importantly - is Israel's capital. This act passed Congress by an overwhelming bipartisan majority and was reaffirmed by a unanimous vote of the Senate only six months ago.

Yet, for over 20 years, every previous American president has exercised the law's waiver, refusing to move the US embassy to Jerusalem or to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital city.

Presidents issued these waivers under the belief that delaying the recognition of Jerusalem would advance the cause of peace. Some say they lacked courage, but they made their best judgments based on facts as they understood them at the time. Nevertheless, the record is in. After more than two decades of waivers, we are no closer to a lasting peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. It would be folly to assume that repeating the exact same formula would now produce a different or better result.

Therefore, I have determined that it is time to officially recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

While previous presidents have made this a major campaign promise, they failed to deliver. Today, I am delivering.

I've judged this course of action to be in the best interests of the United States of America and the pursuit of peace between Israel and the Palestinians. This is a long-overdue step to advance the peace process and to work towards a lasting agreement.

Israel is a sovereign nation with the right like every other sovereign nation to determine its own capital. Acknowledging this as a fact is a necessary condition for achieving peace.



Is this the prophesied End of Days?

For some ecstatic observers of Trump's White House declaration this week, in which the president formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, there is ample reason to believe that it is.

"The prophets' words of prophecy are coming forth from the Bible and becoming facts right before our eyes," said Likud lawmaker and prominent Temple Mount movement figure Yehuda Glick, appearing on Israel Channel 10 television Wednesday evening as Israel awaited Trump's expected announcement on Jerusalem.

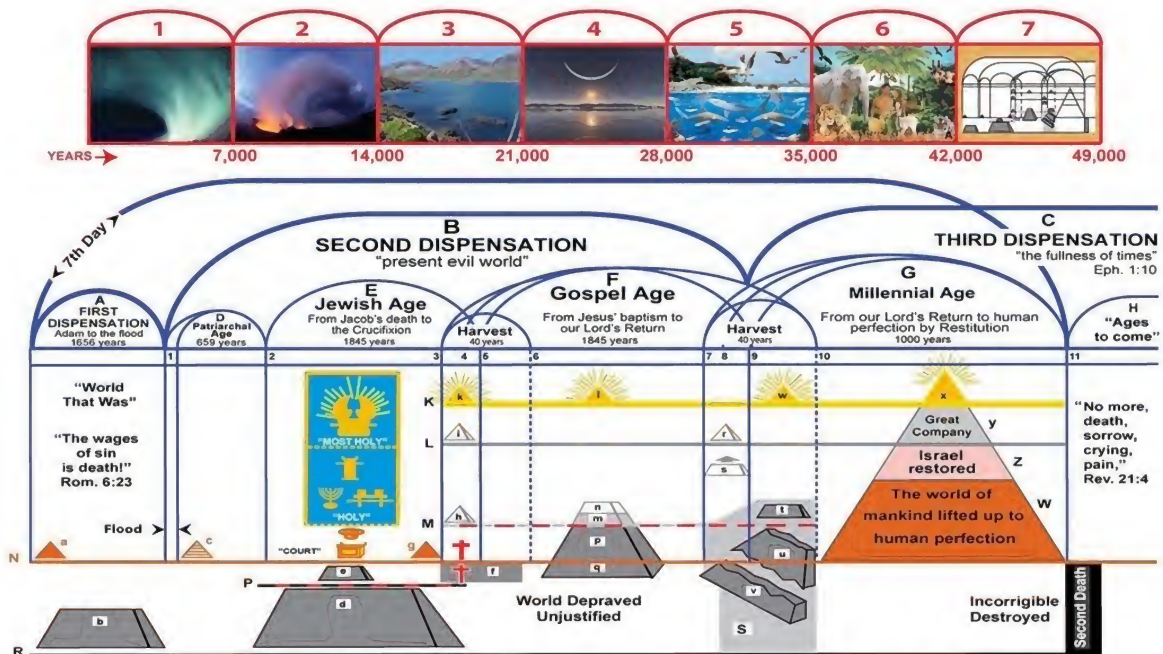
But the rise of the State of Israel, coupled with Trump's declaration, had now changed all that, Glick suggested: "So Mister Jeremiah, I'm sending you a WhatsApp: 'Jerusalem is no longer alone like a widow. Jerusalem is recognized as the capital of the Jewish People.'"

Trump's Jerusalem Move 'Step Closer to Armageddon' Say US ...

<https://sputniknews.com/.../201712071059785236-trump-jerusalem-bible-armageddo...> ▼
1 day ago - President Donald **Trump** has said the United States recognized Jerusalem, rather than Tel Aviv, as the capital of Israel. A prominent US evangelical Christian ... Dr. Reagan, who has studied **Biblical prophecies** for many years, explained how he foresaw the **end** of the **world**. He said first would come the ...

Is Donald Trump the Antichrist? - Prophecy Proof Insights

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U.S. President Donald **Trump** dominates media coverage in the United States and attracts media attention throughout the **world**. He is an unusual figure in American Politics because he comes from outside of the **world** of politics and conducts himself in a manner that many American politicians and political commentators ...

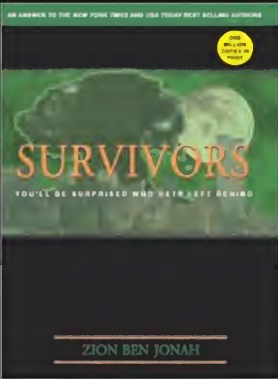


The VISION . . . Shall Speak . . . at the Time of the End . . . Habakkuk 2:3

"A Plan of the Ages, which he formed for the ANOINTED Jesus our Lord;"—Ephesians 3:11 [Emphatic Diaglott]
 "Write down the vision and make it plain upon tables that everyone may read it fluently."—Habakkuk 2:2 [Leeser's Translation]

CHART OF THE AGES

Illustrating God's plan for bringing the Saints to glory, and humanity to earthly perfection —



Survivors

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2. Foretold

The control towers were in chaos, both at Gatwick and at Heathrow... in fact, all over Europe, as they tried to deal with so many returning flights. On his headphones in the cockpit of the big 747, Rayford Strait had been able to pick up something about a charter flight missing off the coast of Scotland. It had run out of fuel while trying to get back to England. There was no telling what had become of the many flights which would not have had enough fuel to make it back to Europe. They would have been forced to put down somewhere in North America, with or without airport runways. There must have been dozens of crashes.

When Rayford had landed and walked into the airport, he started to get a clearer picture of the enormity of the problem. Amidst the pandemonium of flight cancellations and unscheduled arrivals the airport was abuzz with talk about a huge pre-emptive military strike against the United States, by Russia. It was 2pm in London, but only 8am in Chicago. The sun had not even come up on the West Coast of America yet, and it would be a few hours before any video coverage would be available, but every news station in the world was interrupting its normal programming to give sketchy first reports of the disaster.

Early estimates put the deaths at five million. Later reports would verify that the loss in human life was already several times that figure, and it would almost double over the next few weeks.

20 SURVIVORS

Damage to cities, highways, and airports meant that reconstruction was out of the question, even if there had been no nuclear fallout to worry about. The entire country was without government, without power, without communication, and without vital transportation links. The central business district of nearly a hundred major American cities had been entirely wiped out. If the attack had not come in the middle of the night, the loss in human lives would have been several times higher.

Hospitals in the inner cities had been destroyed, and along with them had gone their entire on-duty medical staffs. What medical and rescue services were still available had to function almost without administration, and that was assuming that the rescue personnel themselves were still alive and able to work. America was suddenly back in the middle ages; everyone was being forced to fend for themselves to survive.

Emergency services throughout the English-speaking world were quick to start marshalling forces to airlift rescue supplies, protective clothing, and medical personnel to America, Mexico, and Canada. The wounded would need to be treated as quickly as possible, although for many hundreds of thousands, even treatment would not save them. Those who were already dead would most likely be left where they were.

There were mixed feelings from the non-English-speaking world. Everyone was, of course, shocked

21 2. FORETOLD

But U.S. President Gerald Fitzhugh had made many enemies with his growing military involvement in world affairs. He had conducted numerous wars of 'liberation', supposedly aimed at wiping out 'terrorism'. His closest aides swore that he genuinely believed he was doing God's will. They said that he experienced personal pain at the civilian casualties that he had caused, but that he felt it was necessary in order to create a kind of holy world peace.

Xu Dangchao, from Tibet, had been elected Secretary General of the United Nations one year earlier, two years after Tibet had been admitted to the world body, and three years after the U.N. headquarters had been shifted to Geneva. Although Dangchao's policies were wildly popular with Russia and with the Third World, his hands had been tied because of America's veto power in the U.N. Security Council. Dangchao wanted to erase the Third World debt and to do away with prejudicial import/export duties, which had the effect of favouring rich nations and further crippling the poorer ones. America's weak justification for opposing the scheme was just that Dangchao was trying to do 'too much too soon'.

Russia and China, who strongly backed Dangchao, were as stubborn as America about vetoing American proposals for military intervention in countries where the U.S. believed human rights were being abused. But the U.S. had ways of working around a veto from either Russia or China. It used its wealth and military might to form military alliances, with which it could wage wars on its own.

22 SURVIVORS

Sadly, President Fitzhugh found that the more he had played God with the future of countries he saw as being 'evil', the easier it had become to justify interference even when atrocities committed by the side he was helping were worse than those by the ones he was committing America to destroy.

Of course the American public had lapped it all up. The important thing, politically, was that Fitzhugh had not lost a single skirmish while he had been in office. As long as he was careful to target small revolutionary movements and relatively weak countries, and then to hit them hard, he was almost guaranteed success. Troops would no sooner return triumphant from one conflict than he would be sending out more to settle another. Americans were more proud than ever to be Americans. They truly saw themselves as the saviours of the world. And President Fitzhugh, with his claim to being born again, never missed an opportunity to remind voters that God was on his side.

But now, with America in the throes of death, Russia, China, and their hero, Dangchao, had nothing to fear either from Fitzhugh, or from Britain or France -- the other two permanent members of the Security Council. (France had been distancing itself from the U.S. anyway.) It appeared that all three of the dissenting nations had been subdued in the space of just a few hours!

Rayford was told to get some sleep, but to stay in touch with the airport, so that he could be called

23 2 FORETOLD

in if his plane was needed for a mercy mission. All commercial flights to the U.S. had been cancelled. The British government had already declared a state of emergency. This meant that the British military would take command of all local airlines and all local airline pilots. Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and many European nations were making similar moves to assist. Supplies urgently needed to be flown to North America, and refugees needed to be flown out. The entire population of the U.S. was about to be evacuated -- at least what remained of it.

There had been no reports of damage in Canada, apart from a couple of hits in unpopulated regions, and these were apparently caused by defective missiles. It seemed that Russia's war had been only with the U.S., not with Canada.

England, Australia, and other countries that were sympathetic with America had also escaped without a hint of attack. So airports in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec, and Vancouver were being geared up for round the clock arrivals and departures. Rayford, along with all other available pilots, would be playing an important part in the rescue operation.

Although he was tired from the trip, there was too much happening for Rayford to sleep straight away. He checked into the Airport Hilton, then laid on the bed fully clothed. He stared at the ceiling in the same state of shock that so much of the world was in at that very moment. He thought

24	SURVIVORS	2. FORETOLD	25	26	SURVIVORS	2. FORETOLD	27								
<p>about Irene, about Chloe, and about Raymie. His concerns turned only briefly to other relatives in the U.S. who may have been hit.</p> <p>Telephone communication with the U.S. was virtually impossible because so many lines had been knocked out. Even satellite phones were being affected by the fallout. Fortunately, Rayford had bought Irene a microwave satphone, so that he could call her from the cockpit when passing through the relatively narrow band on the Pan-Con route from London to Chicago. That would now be his main link with her. He would probably be able to give her another call on his flight back to Canada.</p> <p>Images of how it must have been for the millions who had already died haunted Rayford. His thoughts returned to Irene and the kids down in the basement. There was comfort in knowing that they, at least, were still alive. With any luck, he would be talking to them within the next 24 hours. He silently thanked God for that. In time, he hoped to be able to find a way to get rescuers to the house, so they could take his family to safety.</p> <p>Late that afternoon, after a few hours of fitful sleep, Rayford awoke, showered, then left word at the hotel desk that he was taking a cab to the airport. He figured airline officials could tell him more about what was happening than he would be able to learn from any other news source.</p> <p>A visit to the airline offices above the departure lounge revealed that Rayford had been assigned to fly out at six the next morning, on a</p>				<p>flight to Toronto. There would be only a few passengers (mostly doctors and nurses), but the plane would also carry tents, medical supplies, food, and radiation-proof clothing. They were already being loaded in a special hangar at the south end of the airport.</p> <p>Rayford further learned that, when word had begun to spread, only hours after the bombing had stopped, that Canada had not been hit, this had started a mass northern exodus from the United States. The northern highways were already packed with people fleeing the scene. Canadian authorities were frantically trying to set up refugee camps to contain them.</p> <p>Fortunately, it was nearly summer, so thousands of people were quickly accommodated outside, near Canada's border with the U.S. This left churches and school auditoriums free to be turned into hospitals for the wounded. Helicopters and land rescue vehicles started almost immediately to ferry the wounded out of the northern states, but even then they were only able to service a few of the worst hit cities. Vancouver was caring for the wounded from Seattle, Portland, and Spokane; Toronto was taking survivors from Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo; and Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec were doing what they could to help refugees from the area that included Boston, Rochester, Philadelphia, and New York City.</p> <p>At the same time, Canadians themselves were panicking about the fallout that was headed their</p>				<p>way. Airports in all of the major cities were packed with passengers waiting for stand-by seats out of the country. Hundreds of flights which would have normally been destined for the U.S. were quickly rerouted to Canada, where airlines could be guaranteed to fill every seat, regardless of what they charged or where their destination was to be. Officials from Emergency Preparedness Canada were frantically trying to set up priority criteria for determining who should be allowed to take the first flights out of the country.</p> <p>A TV in the Heathrow VIP lounge updated viewers on how many U.S. cities and airports had been demolished. Aircraft were still able to come and go from some smaller airstrips. But that would not be enough to meet the far more urgent needs of the larger cities -- cities like Chicago -- which were the ones that had suffered the greatest losses. Milwaukee and St. Paul/Minneapolis, both closer to Canada than Chicago, were on their own in providing transport to the refugee camps being set up by their northern neighbours.</p> <p>President Gerald Fitzhugh and his family were believed to be trapped beneath the capital building in Washington, D.C., where they had been rushed to shelter as soon as the alert went up. If a bomb had landed close enough to bring down the White House (which appeared to be the case), then escape for those beneath it would not be easy.</p> <p>People who had survived the bombing were</p>				<p>being told via radio broadcasts to seek shelter and to await further instructions. There would be attempts to relocate them to places away from the fallout, but first the authorities needed to establish exactly where that might be. Weather reports before the attack showed a cold front moving southeast across the Midwest. The fallout cloud would, therefore, be likely to move in that direction. However this was only good news for people on the American West Coast, because for every cloud moving away from other localities, there was another coming toward them from the west.</p> <p>With nuclear strikes in San Diego, Anaheim, L.A., Fresno, Sacramento, Oakland, San Francisco, Portland, Eugene, Tacoma, Seattle, and Spokane, states on the West Coast were amongst the most heavily hit anyway. Only the area between Boston and Washington had been more heavily hit.</p> <p>Rayford could see from the first film footage of refugees heading for Canada, that he and his family would not have much chance of reunion through that route. Both sides of the freeways were being used for northbound traffic, which was at a standstill in places and only creeping along in others. Traffic had to detour around major cities and other badly damaged roads. Against such a flow of traffic, only emergency vehicles had any hope of travelling south.</p> <p>The freeways themselves were becoming increasingly blocked by vehicles without fuel, which</p>			
28	SURVIVORS	2. FORETOLD	29	30	SURVIVORS	2. FORETOLD	31								
<p>had to be pushed to the side of the road and deserted. That left the drivers and passengers of those vehicles to venture forward on foot. Days out on the road would mean days more exposed to the deadly fallout. Civil Defence warned against trying to escape before it could be established that there was someplace safe to go. But millions took no heed.</p> <p>Chicago was too far away from Toronto to attract Toronto's limited rescue resources. But some local authorities in the Chicago area were commandeering aircraft, vehicles, and even ships to ferry survivors north. Everyone working on rescue operations was putting themselves at risk, and protective clothing was urgently required.</p> <p>Rayford took some consolation in knowing that, even if he could not get to his own family, he would be helping the overall rescue effort. In time his involvement might give him the opening that he needed to help Irene and the kids as well.</p> <p>At about 7pm, Rayford left the VIP lounge and headed for the cab rank. He had learned as much as he could, and now it was time to get a few more hours of sleep before his departure. On the way out of the airport lobby, he was approached by a slim, blond man, in his thirties. The shabbily dressed man stuck a booklet in Rayford's face and asked in a broad German accent if he wanted to read it. <i>The Fall of America</i> was the title. It appeared above a picture of an upside-down American flag. Rayford pushed the man aside in disgust.</p>				<p>Always someone ready to cash in on the sufferings of others! he thought to himself. But just as he walked out the door of the airport, it hit him. The attack had only taken place a few hours ago! How could someone in England already have produced a booklet telling about it? He raced back into the airport, his eyes searching in every direction for the man. The little German was near the Pan-Con ticket counter, talking to two or three other people, who also appeared to be sending him away.</p> <p>"Where did you get that? Who wrote it?" Rayford whispered almost at the level of a shout, when he had caught the man's attention by grabbing his arm. He was trying hard not to create a scene, and yet he was desperate to know what was going on.</p> <p>"Some friends... together, we wrote it," the man replied, half in fear. "You are interested?" he asked.</p> <p>"Yes, I'm interested!" said Rayford emphatically. "Very interested. But first tell me how you knew it was going to happen."</p> <p>"Vee study Bible prophecy," said the sottily-spoken little man. "And vee pray. Vee have been saying it for few years now. It is most imperative zat you read zis book." His brow was wrinkled in an almost exaggerated show of seriousness. But then, how could anyone possibly exaggerate the seriousness of what had just happened in America?</p>				<p>The young German went on dramatically: "Udder ships are coming too... Ferry serioussings."</p> <p>Rayford wanted to read the book, but he also wanted some instant answers. He offered the man -- Reinhard was his name -- a meal, if he would sit down and talk to him.</p> <p>"It is most important zat I get zese books to zeh people," replied Reinhard. "Vee can talk later."</p> <p>"Please!" Rayford begged, almost in tears now. "I'll be flying to Canada tonight. My family is over there. I must know what is going on before I leave."</p> <p>Reinhard sensed an urgency in Rayford's voice that he must not have found in his other clients, because he quickly backed down. "Vere do you want to talk?" he asked.</p> <p>Rayford took him to a table in the nearest restaurant, ordered a meal for them both and then opened the floor for Reinhard to explain what was going on.</p> <p>"Vat is happening now... It is yudgement from God on America. But it is also opening for Russia to control zee United Nations. Dangchao is Russia's man, you understand?" Rayford knew of the growing unrest throughout the world at what many countries considered was America's abuse of power within the U.N. That much of Reinhard's explanation made sense, but it was not what he was looking for.</p> <p>"Are you telling me that you knew this was going to happen just from reading the Bible?" he asked incredulously.</p>				<p>"I cannot show all vat you wish to know in such short time. You vill read it in zeh book."</p> <p>In his clipped German manner, Reinhard's promise sounded more like a command. "You vill see for yourself. For now, vee have little time. I must move quickly. Zeh Bible tells of five vord powers. Zay are a bear, an eagle, a lion, a leopard, and a rooster. Zese are signs for Russia, America, England, Africa, and France." He counted them off on his fingers. "You must know, zee leopard is being now used as sign of solidarity for zeh Sird Vord."</p> <p>Rayford was finding it difficult to follow, but he decided to let Reinhard carry on.</p> <p>"England, France, and America can veto plans by Russia and China in zee United Nations. Zee udder ten Security Council members... zay are called rotating members... Zay come from zee udder countries."</p> <p>"So?" said Rayford, who was showing only mild interest at this stage. He had other questions that he wanted to ask, but he would wait a bit longer.</p> <p>Reinhard went on. "Zee eagle's vings are plucked. You vill see it in the book. It is in the Bible. Zis bombing, it is zee plucking of zee eagle's vings. After falls zee eagle, zeh lion... zat is, England... loses its power. Zeh rooster vings, zay join vit zeh leopard. Zat is France and all of Europe joining vit zeh Sird Vord. You see, it is because zeh bear... Russia... subdues. Zat is to say she stops zee vord powers from fighting</p>			

32	SURVIVORS	2. FORETOLD	33	34	SURVIVORS	5. On the Road to Montana	51
<p>against her. She does it by plucking zuh vings of zee eagle. Vit help from zee udder ten nations zuh new leader vit control zuh vord."</p> <p>Rayford was losing patience. "I'm not interested in all the political stuff," he said. "Do you have any answers? My family is over there. If you really know what is going on, what can I do for them? What <i>should</i> I do?"</p> <p>"It is God's punishment," Reinhard said soberly. "If your people are alive, zay vit be forced to leave. No one vit live zair <i>ever</i> again. God ist angry vit zuh shurch people in America."</p> <p>"The church people?" Rayford said with genuine surprise. "Why the church people?" He was thinking of Irene.</p> <p>"Zay fight zuh teashings of sheesus. Zay do not prepare for vat is coming, and day do not tell the truth to udders."</p> <p>"My wife is a church person," Rayford responded indignantly. "She was <i>always</i> talking about this... this... something called The Great Tribulation."</p> <p>"No, no! Zis is not Great Tribulation - not yet," said Reinhard. "Zis is only zuh <i>start</i> of vat is coming. But your vite, she needs taith vat is strong enough to go <i>through</i> zuh Great Tribulation. I do not sink she vit find it in zuh shurches."</p> <p>"She doesn't <i>need</i> to go through it - least not the way <i>she</i> tells it," Rayford replied. He was surprised to hear himself defending something he had always scolded at. "She says that she will be taken to heaven before it happens."</p>		<p>"And did she tell you zat America was going to be punished before she goes to heffen?" Reinhard asked quietly, as he stared at his lap. When Rayford did not answer immediately, Reinhard raised his head, and then his blond eyebrows in further anticipation.</p> <p>Rayford finally spoke. "Well, I don't know. I don't recall her saying anything about that." Even as he spoke, he was thinking about how emotional Irene had been on the phone. "Maybe she missed that part."</p> <p>"She vit need help ... <i>spiritual</i> help," Reinhard said sympathetically. He went on slowly, as though talking to himself. "It is so ferry hard for the shurch people. Zay cannot say ven zay are wrong." Then he looked Rayford directly in the eyes, and spoke slowly and deliberately, his own eyes opening wide as he spoke. "You must not let her run away. She vit want to run off and find her Sheesus."</p> <p>Rayford did not like hearing his wife talked about in such a way at a time when he was so close to losing her. He would take the time to study Reinhard's book more closely later, but he was not getting any information from this strange little man that would help him in his present situation. So he excused himself and left Reinhard to finish his meal alone.</p> <p>Rayford wondered as he glanced back at the skinny little street preacher wolfing the last of the food down, just how long it had been since Reinhard's last meal.</p>		<p>Zion Ben-Jonah Writes: Predictions about the fall of America are mostly based on Daniel 7:1-7 and Revelation 13:1-2. Daniel's prophecy is usually assumed to be about the original Babylonian Empire (represented by a Lion with Eagle wings), the Persian Empire (represented by a Bear), the Greek Empire (represented by a Leopard with four chicken wings), and the Roman Empire (represented by a horrible 'Beast' that devours the whole earth). And yet these same symbols apply to four of the five members of the U.N. Security Council. (The symbol for the fifth member, China, is a Dragon.) Only the leopard (or panther) is not a prominent national symbol today, except as a symbol for Africa, militant Blacks, or, perhaps, the Third World.</p> <p>In Revelation 13:2, a future world power is described which has attributes of all the animals listed in Daniel 7, <i>except</i> the Eagle. The Eagle, apparently, no longer exists at that time!</p> <p>There are ten rotating members of the U.N. Security Council, taken from the rest of the world. The Bible says that with the help of tan "kings" a resurrected world power will destroy another world power described as a Prostitute... who rules over world trade. (Revelation 17:1-5, 12-16) And her name is Babylon.</p> <p>The <i>Encyclopedia Britannica</i> lists only one city in the modern world which is named Babylon. It is located on Long Island, in New York City, not far from the New York Stock Exchange!</p>		<p>It was nearing nine o'clock on a cool Friday evening in May. The scene was a remote highway interchange in the far north of the American Midwest. At any other time in history, it may have been a night to reflect on the beauties of creation. But in the midst of the greatest destruction the world had ever known, this was no place for such grand thoughts.</p> <p>Irene Strait looked across the campfire at the older man. She had feelings of pity for him, but they were mixed with feelings of disillusionment that bordered on revulsion. For years she had respected him--maybe even idolised him. She had often wished that her own husband could be more like him. Even now Vernon Billings showed outstanding strength and determination. His obsession with reaching Montana continued to drive him on, even though it was looking more and more like he would eventually die from the effects of his foolhardy decision.</p> <p>It would not be fair to call Vernon Billings a con man, for if he was, he had conned himself as well. He had offered to sleep out on the ground that first night, outside of Eau Claire, Minnesota, so that Raymie and the women could sleep more comfortably inside the car. Only when it had started to rain and he had become drenched, had he sought refuge with them inside the vehicle. Fail-</p>	
52	SURVIVORS	5. ON THE ROAD TO MONTANA	53	54	SURVIVORS	5. ON THE ROAD TO MONTANA	55
<p>out from the bombing in Minneapolis was already on the ground, and more came down with the rain.</p> <p>Vernon slept out again on Thursday night, just inside the North Dakota state border, on Highway 94. All of this exposure had made his prognosis much worse than that of most of the other pilgrims camped inside the cloverleaf on the intersection between Highway 94, going west, and Highway 85, going north to Regina, Canada.</p> <p>But Irene was not thinking about what had motivated Vernon to camp out on the first two nights, whether it was heroism or stupidity. What she was thinking about was his behaviour that same day.</p> <p>Food and water were scarce and expensive, but gasoline was the biggest concern for millions of travellers on the nation's highways. Tankers were no longer operating, so stations that sold at normal prices had quickly exhausted their stocks. Traffic was bumper to bumper in places, and often stop and go, as cars sought ways around damaged sections of the highway and around abandoned cars. This slowed progress and increased fuel consumption as well.</p> <p>By Friday morning, any stations that still had fuel could name their own price. Checks and credit cards were useless, and it was not possible to get funds from the banks. The Prospect Heights pilgrims had less than \$100 left when they had pulled into a station just before noon, advertising gas for \$1,000 a tank. The situation was desperate.</p>		<p>Vernon Billings stopped the big Lincoln Town Car next to the pumps and leaned his head on the steering wheel for a moment while he prayed. He then lifted his head, leaned over Elaine to pull a cloth bag from the glove box, and turned to Irene in the back seat. "Irene, can you put the nozzle in the tank and start pumping when the attendant turns it on?" Irene caught a look of horror on Elaine's face.</p> <p>"No, Vern. Don't..." Elaine began.</p> <p>"I'll leave the motor running to save time," Vernon said, ignoring Elaine as he headed for the gas station store. He stayed inside while Irene filled up. When she had replaced the gas hose, Vernon ran out, hopped into the driver's seat and squealed the tyres as he tore out of the driveway.</p> <p>No one said anything, but they all knew that he had used the gun in the cloth bag to get the gas.</p> <p>"It's not like I robbed it," he said, as Elaine glared at him from the passenger seat. "I left him all the money we had. He was the one doing the robbing. It was self-defence."</p> <p>Nothing more was said that whole day, although Irene and Raymie exchanged looks of surprise and bewilderment at the time. Raymie would certainly want an explanation as soon as they were on their own; and Irene had none.</p> <p>That tankful of gas was nearing an end when they had spotted this camp of pilgrims who were also in search of the Messiah in Montana. The campfire caught Vernon's eye first. No one in the</p>		<p>Lincoln had thought to bring matches, and it had turned suddenly cold. Four other cars were stopped by the fire, where people were exchanging stories about what they expected to find in Montana.</p> <p>They all were showing signs of radiation sickness. Some, like Vernon, were losing hair already, and developing sores where their bodies could no longer fight infection. But they all insisted that their problems would be solved when they reached Montana and saw their Saviour.</p> <p>As Irene looked at Vernon, she thought back to something Elaine had confided to her after Raymie had fallen asleep, during their second night together in the car.</p> <p>"It's playing on my conscience," she had said. "You know that voice we talked about back in Illinois? The one that said 'come'? It was just a crow outside the house. I don't know if I did the right thing or not in backing Vernon up. You could describe it as sounding like 'come' as much as you could describe it as sounding like 'caw'." So when Vern said he heard Jesus say 'come', I agreed with him. It didn't take much imagination to hear it as 'come'."</p> <p>Irene could not say that Elaine was entirely wrong about the "sign" from God, nor could she be entirely certain that Vernon had been wrong in reacting to the gas station owner's extortionate pricing. But it was all part of a growing disillusionment, that was starting to make her see a lot of things in a new light.</p>		<p>At the cloverleaf pilgrim camp, sick, weary, and dirty pilgrims were lifting themselves from makeshift beds by the fire to congregate around a late model pick-up that had driven up close to the circle. The driver had hopped up on the back to announce that he had an almost full 44-gallon drum of gasoline to sell. They weren't far from the Montana state border now, and that much gas might be enough to get someone to their destination.</p> <p>Traffic was lighter going west, since most people, like the pick-up owner, were going north. The man with the gas had pumped more than he needed to reach Canada, and now he was going to sell the excess to make some easy money.</p> <p>Other cars were stopped at the same cloverleaf - cars heading north on highway 85. People had come from as far south as Denver to get out of the country. People from other camps at the intersection had been alerted, and they too straggled over to join in the auction.</p> <p>But few of those present had enough cash left to make a serious bid. Only three competitors were left when the price reached \$1,000. They included Tom and Betty White--an elderly couple with two small grandchildren.</p> <p>Irene had spoken with Tom and Betty earlier that evening. The children were orphans now. Betty had been baby-sitting them while their parents attended a function in a part of St. Paul that had sustained a direct hit.</p>	

56	SURVIVORS	5. ON THE ROAD TO MONTANA	57	58	SURVIVORS	5. ON THE ROAD TO MONTANA	59
<p>The couple heard about the Montana Messiah from a neighbour, and they had joined the exodus. Tom had withdrawn funds for a vacation the day before the attack, so he had more cash left than others at the auction. He had, through poor planning, run out of gas just a hundred yards away from the cloverleaf. Both he and Betty were too frail to walk, and the chances of getting a ride to a gas station and back were slim in the present climate. Even if he did find a station with any gas left, there was a good chance that it would be sold out or charging more than he had by the time he could return with his car.</p> <p>After re-checking his bankroll, the thin, grey-haired man called out, "Twelve hundred!" The other two bidders both indicated that they were out of the competition. The man on the pick-up motioned for Tom to bring his money over. Betty held her fists together in front of her chest and made a little jumping motion to express her happiness.</p> <p>But just then, Vernon Billings walked over to the truck. He held his big left hand up for the auctioneer to look at, and he spoke quietly to him. They shook hands, and the old couple were told to put their money away. They had been outbid.</p> <p>Tom and Betty walked off in tears, and sat down beside the children, who were sleeping next to Irene. "Please, take the children!" Betty begged, between sobs. "We'll give you all that we have if you'll just take the children."</p>		<p>Vernon was limping toward Irene, and he overheard the conversation. He shook his head no, indicating with his hands that they did not have room. He signalled for Irene to leave the woman and come over to him.</p> <p>"Praise the Lord!" he whispered, conspiratorially, when she walked up to him. "He accepted my Rolex. Irene, can you bring the car over to the pick-up, so he can fill the tank?"</p> <p>"We can squeeze the children in," pleaded Irene. "Raymie and I can hold them in the back."</p> <p>"And where would we put the boxes? or the water bottles?" The Billingses had loaded both the trunk and back seat up with food, clothes, and water before picking up Irene in Prospect Heights. "I can't allow that," said Vernon.</p> <p>"But it's just food and clothes!" exclaimed Irene. "We're talking about two children here."</p> <p>"Sister, God knows what he's doing. Just thank him for what he has done for us so far. He'll make a way for them too eventually... If it's his will. Trust God, sister. He's brought us this far."</p> <p>Irene walked slowly over to the car. Trust God? she asked herself. They had trusted God that they would be taken in the rapture before all of this happened; that they would be immune to radiation; that Jesus had told them to go to Montana. And now she was supposed to trust God that two innocent children would be cared for without any sacrifice on Vernon Billings' part... or, for that matter, on her part.</p>		<p>Was it really God that she was being asked to trust? Or had Vernon Billings become her replacement for God? She had left her daughter, participated in an armed hold-up, and now beaten an elderly couple and two young children out of their chance for survival, just because Vernon Billings said that it was God's will.</p> <p>Irene started the car and drove it up close to the pick-up. As the man with the 44-gallon drum started to siphon the gas into Vernon's car, she was overwhelmed with a desperate need for Rayford to be there and to help her with a hard decision. All her life she had known God through other people. But now she needed to make one of the most important decisions of her life, and she was being forced to do it without back-up from anyone. She tried to pray, but she lacked the certainty that Vernon Billings' confidence had always given to her in the past.</p> <p>Irene waited patiently in the driver's seat while the auctioneer above her tipped his drum at an angle, and played with the hose to drain the last of it into her tank. By the time he had finished, she had made her mind up. She signalled for Pastor Billings to come over.</p> <p>"Vernon," she began, calling the man by his first name for the first time. "I want you to bring that old couple over here to the car. I want to talk to them." There was a conviction in her voice that shocked Irene as much as it shocked Vernon Billings.</p>		<p>"It's best not to say anything..." her pastor began.</p> <p>"I didn't ask your opinion. I said to <i>bring them here!</i>" she said, through clenched teeth. "Wake Raymie and bring him too." Vernon turned in shock and obeyed her. She was strangely thrilled by her own ability to make such a big decision, and to do it in the face of the man who had made so many of her decisions for her in the past. It was scary, but it was exhilarating too.</p> <p>When Vernon returned, his wife was with him. "Get in the car, Raymie," Irene said. Raymie climbed in the back, while the others gathered around the window on the driver's side. She spoke up enough so that they could all hear, but not loud enough for any other pilgrims to hear.</p> <p>"There has been a change of plans. We're heading north," she said. "We're not going to Montana. If you want a lift to Canada, you can join us."</p> <p>"No, don't say that, Sister Strait," argued Pastor Billings as he moved closer to the car. "We're almost there. We can take the children if you like..."</p> <p>Just then he saw the barrel of his own pistol poking at him through the window.</p> <p>"Sister Strait! What are you doing? Put that down!"</p> <p>BANG! A shot rang out. It whizzed over Vernon's head. Other campers turned and looked, but assumed that the car had backfired.</p>	
60	SURVIVORS	5. ON THE ROAD TO MONTANA	61	62	SURVIVORS		
<p>"I'm serious, Vernon!" Irene said. "I've got a family back in Illinois, and I mean to find them. America has been destroyed, for whatever reason, I don't know. But I can't change things just through wishful thinking."</p> <p>"Now, I'll ask just one more time: Who wants to come to Canada with me?" Tom and Betty looked timidly at each other. Their expressions suggested that their faith in the Montana myth had been teetering already. They looked back in Irene's direction and timidly raised their hands.</p> <p>"Get the kids," Irene said. "It'll be crowded, but we'll do our best. What about you, Vernon? You can come with us if you like."</p> <p>Vernon Billings was in deep pain—both physically and spiritually. Sweat formed on his brow as another wave of nausea swept over him. He had travelled too far down the road. His religious pride would not allow him to change directions now. Right or wrong, he was going to die for his cause. He shook his head, and then turned away to dry retch.</p> <p>Irene eyed Elaine. "And you?"</p> <p>"My place is with Vern," she said, as she moved closer to her fevered husband and reached out to comfort him.</p> <p>"I understand," Irene said, allowing herself to soften just for a moment. "I love you... both."</p> <p>The pastor's wife returned Irene's expression of love, and then Tom White got clearance from Irene before walking over to Vernon and Elaine.</p>		<p>He gave them the keys to his car and his roll of money while Betty loaded the kids into the car.</p> <p>"My car's up there just past the overpass," Tom said, pointing to a light green Ford. "It's totally empty, but maybe you can get out of here with this." He indicated the wad of money.</p> <p>Then Tom returned to Irene and joined Raymie and the older child in the back seat. Betty held the baby in the front with Irene. There were two boxes in the back too, making it quite crowded.</p> <p>Irene put the car into drive, waved silently to her former pastor and his wife, and then pulled out onto the highway.</p> <p>"Mom, it's too crowded back here," Raymie complained.</p> <p>Irene responded slowly and deliberately as she drove, giving each word time to sink in: "I'm only going to say it once, Raymie. If you or anyone else in this car doesn't like the conditions, you just ask and I'll let you out. I'm sorry, Raymie, that I haven't taught you to be more disciplined before now. But these are dangerous times, and we all need to grow up and face reality real fast. It's time to stop complaining and to start thanking God that we are still alive, and that we have the means to get away from here. Do you understand me?"</p> <p>"Yes, Mom," said Raymie. Tom and Betty also whispered acceptance of the conditions.</p> <p>They drove on in silence. And as they drove, more than one of the car's occupants was praying in a way that he or she had never prayed before.</p>		<p>Zion Ben-Jonah Writes</p> <p><i>The one thing that Christians need to learn most if they are to be ready for the tests that lie ahead, is how to hear and obey the voice of God. It starts with following your conscience. Because so much of the world has seared their conscience, they are rarely able to hear God's voice at all.</i></p> <p>Obedience to God has been replaced with obedience to human authorities... parents, teachers, pastors, and police. Irene's problem was not that she obeyed Vernon Billings, or even that what Vernon Billings did was necessarily immoral. (After all, Irene herself used the gun in the end!) Her problem was just that she had failed, previously, to ask God what to do, or at least that she had assumed that God's will would always be revealed through her pastor. She had to actually leave her pastor before she could truly grow spiritually.</p> <p>The religious institution tends to teach that submission to the institution will guarantee salvation, when it often happens that just the opposite is true. Salvation comes when we find a faith that is bigger than the institution.</p> <p>Read Luke 17:31-37. The disciples wanted to know in advance where people should go in the last days, and Jesus gave a cryptic reply, which indicated that we each need to be like the birds, open to the subtle prompting of the Holy Spirit to tell us, minute by minute, where we should go, and when.</p>			

BOOK TWO

9. The Countdown Begins

"Another one!" Rayford exclaimed to himself as he sat at his desk late one night in January.

It had been eighteen months since the Straits had joined the Jesans. Rayford's keen interest in Bible prophecy, and his natural aptitude for teaching had catapulted him to a leadership role in the tiny community. He wondered how he could have ever been happy as an airline pilot. Life had been so exciting since he had made the dramatic decision to let go and give everything to God.

Rayford's role in the community had triggered a commitment from Neville too, who was thrilled to be able to work full-time with Rayford on something he was good at... computers. Neville was like a young man again, and Mary, who hardly ever said a word, was happy to see the change in her husband.

The two men had been working together for more than a year, with Rayford producing articles on a wide range of topics (but especially on how each topic related to what was happening in world events at that time), and with Neville setting up a web page where people could go to access all of the material that Rayford was producing. Some days Rayford would produce four or five articles in a single day. Much of the inspiration for them came from his involvement with the rest of the Jesans, and from thoughts which they shared from their stints out on the streets.

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Neville installed a guest book, a hit counter, an internal search engine, and a tracker on their home page. He also developed an automatic study course, which would test people on a list of questions from one article before directing them to the next one. Neville made sure that the page was well represented on search engines all over the world, and he collected thousands of email addresses for a worldwide newsletter which Chloe and Reinhard produced once a month. The newsletter aimed at stimulating enough curiosity to get people to visit their web site.

"Look at this," Rayford said when he had finished reading the papers he had in his hands. He spun the chair around and shoved them toward Irene. "Six letters in today's snail mail, and they all sound like genuine seekers. Wouldn't it be great to get a new member out of this?"

Rayford had come to see the truth in the group's theory that God was deliberately blocking people from joining them. They had not had a new member since he had joined, and he had tried everything he could think of to locate the problem. About once a week they would get a promising letter from someone who had read one of their tracts or visited their website. But they rarely heard from these people again. Getting six serious enquiries in one day was unprecedented.

Irene skim read the letters and then spoke. "Sounds great, doesn't it? What do you plan to do with them?"

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"Neville and Mary will be away next week. I may try to get all six of them here on Monday. Then I won't have to answer the same questions over and over."

"Do you think it's wise to bring them here?" asked Irene. Group policy was not to give out Neville's address without consulting on it first.

"I have a feeling about this," Rayford said. "I think there's a connection with the Jerusalem talks."

Rayford was talking about a U.N. plan to construct a Temple in Jerusalem for the Jews. The world was gradually recovering from the destruction of America, and now there was time for people to consider other matters. Talks had been going on in Israel for the past two or three weeks. Secretary General Dangchao himself had been there for the past three days, and even the Pope was participating.

The Arabs had been adamant that there would be all-out war if anyone dared to touch the Dome of the Rock, their most sacred mosque. It had been built centuries earlier, almost on the original site of Solomon's Temple, where Jews had for centuries offered sacrifices to God. However, Dangchao had come up with a compromise package. It involved construction of a Jewish Temple on one side of the Dome of the Rock and a matching Christian temple on the other side. The sacred Muslim mosque itself would not be touched. The newly elected Pope Pius XIII had hinted that he was prepared to move from the Vatican to take up residence in Jerusalem, not far from the new Temple, as a symbol of Vatican commitment to this historic step toward religious unity.

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Muslims were not thrilled about the offer, but there was something in Dangchao's manner that suggested he would not take No for an answer.

If people had thought that the Americans were biased in favour of the Jews, the Americans looked positively wishy washy by comparison to Dangchao. U.N. troops had been increased in the holy city, and Muslims took it as a warning of what Dangchao might do if they turned down his Temple "offer".

"Talks in Jerusalem? I can't remember a time when there hasn't been some sort of talk making news in the Middle East," Irene commented.

"I know," Rayford answered. "Before I became a Jesan, I used to wonder why there was so much interest in the talks. Must've been because people in the know were looking for hints of the agreement even back then. Now, after all these years, we could be about to witness the real thing. If Dangchao pulls it off, it could confirm what I've been thinking about him."

What Rayford had been thinking was that Xu Dangchao was the prophesied Antichrist. Such a revelation was unthinkable to the general public, because all that Dangchao did seemed to be for the good of mankind. It was only because of Rayford's understanding of Bible prophecy that he felt there were sinister forces behind Dangchao's charisma. The one problem had been his name. According to Bible prophecy (Revelation 13:17-18), the numeric value of the letters in the name of the world's final ruler should add up to 666. Whatever system Rayford used (Greek, Hebrew, Latin, or even

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Dangchao's native Chinese), the value of the letters in his name tell short.

The only Roman numerals, for example, were X, D, and C, which equalled 610. The letters I, V, and L were needed, to make up the missing 56. In Greek and Hebrew tallies, the figures were even farther out. Rayford did not know what to make of it. Yet there were other things that pointed to Xu Dangchao being the prophesied Antichrist.

Dangchao's success in taking control of the world through the U.N. was a hint of his special role, although here too, Rayford had to admit that the nations of the world were not officially controlled by the United Nations yet. They still continued to operate independently of one another.

But Dangchao had built up U.N. military might to the point where U.N. troops were deployed in great numbers throughout the world. Because of their presence, the world had experienced total peace, it not total unity, during the year and a half since the collapse of America.

"The letters I, V, X, L, C, and D (Roman numerals for 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, and 500) must all appear once (and only once), and the letter M (1,000) must not appear at all for a name to add up to 666 in Roman numerals."

Note: The names used in this book are totally fictitious. It is possible that the real Antichrist will have a name that adds up to 666 based on the numerical value of Latin, Greek and Hebrew letters.

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If Secretary General Dangchao were to succeed in getting a Temple for the Jews, then not only would Rayford be convinced that he was the Antichrist, but he would also be able to compute the exact number of days until Jesus would return.

Rayford was up late that night studying the six letters that he had received, and thinking about the proposed meeting on Monday. He refused meals on Saturday and Sunday, spending most of his time alone in his room or outside walking. He said only enough to Irene to let her know that nothing was wrong, either between the two of them or between Rayford and God. Instead, his intense meditation sprang from a sober anticipation about what God might be about to do.

When he phoned the enquirers on Saturday, Rayford found them all to be co-operative and hopeful. John Doorman and Sister Mary Teresa had jobs that allowed them to set their own hours. Matthew Baker and Sheila Armitage had no job. And the other two said they would take the day off on Monday, to be in on the meeting.

John Doorman was a 42-year-old Jehovah's Witness who found the Jesan interpretation of prophecy appealing. The Jesans taught that all governments were inherently evil, and that God was looking for a loyalty to himself that would transcend political issues. Doorman was also a pacifist. He had worked for a while as a missionary in his native Africa, where he had been jailed for a number of years for his beliefs. He had never been married,

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and he worked part-time as a handyman in order to make more time available for his church work.

Sister Mary Teresa was a 56-year-old Catholic nun with the Little Sisters of Jesus. She lived and worked with migrants in one of the poorest suburbs of London. She was attracted to the simple community life-style of the Jesans, and their idea of building a community composed of married couples and families, as well as celibate singles.

Matthew Baker was a 40-year-old Baptist who kept himself busy visiting hospitals and prisons, and passing out tracts on the streets. He was zealous about many moral issues and showed special appreciation for the Jesan stand on marriage and divorce. His wife had left him in the second year of their marriage, because she objected to his religious beliefs.

«Sheila Armitage was a 70-year-old Quaker lesbian who was drawn to the group's tolerance of other religions, and their teaching that sincerity means more to God than theology.

Mike Anastopoulos was a 38-year-old student from Turkey, who was doing a doctorate in archaeology. He had no religious affiliation, but referred to himself as a humanist. Mike expressed interest in what the Jesan community was saying about economics in general, and about survival outside of the economic and political system in particular.

Finally, there was Luis Rafael, a 29-year-old Pentecostal migrant from Brazil. He had, two years earlier, joined The Family, a radical Pentecostal

100	SURVIVORS	9. THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS 101	102	SURVIVORS	9. THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS 103
<p>community with controversial teachings about sex. Luis liked The Family's teachings on Bible prophecy and living by faith, but he had become disillusioned with some of their other teachings. He liked the Jesans' literal approach to the teachings of Jesus, and their tendency to use them as the standard by which to measure all other teachings.</p> <p>Rayford had read through all of their letters several times on Friday night, and he had discussed some of the issues that interested each of them in his phone calls on Saturday. All six sounded like they were genuinely hungering after more truth, although there were the usual disturbing signs of prejudice in each of them as well. He prayed that God would give him the wisdom to deal with these prejudices as they came up on Monday.</p> <p>Luis Rafael was the first to arrive on Monday morning. But Rayford had barely introduced him to Irene before the doorbell rang again, and again. By ten o'clock, all six seekers were nervously seated in Neville's living room.</p> <p>"Let's see. Where shall we begin?" Rayford mumbled half to himself. "How about if you start, by asking any questions you might have, and we'll do our best to answer them." He glanced over at Irene, as though looking for support.</p> <p>Mike Anastopoulos, the agnostic archaeologist, had learned enough during introductions to know that all the others had religious affiliations. He spoke first. "Must we believe in God to be part of this group?"</p>	<p>"It depends on what you mean by believing in God," Rayford replied. He saw an immediate reaction from both Matthew and Luis, the two evangelical Christians in the room. They both shifted forward in their seats to better hear what Rayford was about to say.</p> <p>"Theology doesn't save us," he said. "What saves us is faith in the highest revelation of God that we know. Call it love or truth if you like, but we call it God."</p> <p>Mike seemed happy with that answer, but Matthew and Luis exchanged glances before Luis raised his hand to speak.</p> <p>"I disagree," he said. "If someone's really sincere, then they would have to believe in God."</p> <p>John Doorman had reached into a briefcase that stood beside his chair, pulling out a small magazine, which he offered to Mike. "Jehovah God wants everyone to know him by name," he said. "There's an article in here that will help you."</p> <p>"Is that a Watchtower magazine?" asked Matthew. "Are you a Jehovah's Witness?"</p> <p>"Uh-oh," thought Rayford. This had been what he most wanted to avoid. Jehovah's Witnesses were despised by most mainline Christian denominations. All this enthusiasm in one room could accomplish powerful things for God, but only if it could be made to work in harmony. Already it was taking a turn that Rayford had seen religious zeal take many times before. He had believed that God was going to work a miracle today, but things were not looking that way at the moment.</p>	<p>"Yes, I am a witness for Jehovah," replied John Doorman, sticking his chin out with pride.</p> <p>"And what about you?" Matthew Baker said, addressing Sister Mary Teresa. "Take it, from the way you're dressed, that you're a Catholic. Do you pray to Mary?"</p> <p>"Well, I . . . Sister Mary was lost for words. "You see what's happening here?" Mike interjected, standing and pointing at Matthew. "This is why I never had any time for religion. Nothing but arguments and nit-picking. Here, take your magazine. I'm not interested." He handed the Watchtower back to John Doorman.</p> <p>"Maybe we should all just . . ." Sheila began, hoping to calm people down; but she was interrupted, as Mike continued:</p> <p>"I didn't come to hear what the rest of you have to say. I came to hear what the Jesans have to say!"</p> <p>"It doesn't matter what the Jesans believe," shouted Luis, who had also jumped to his feet. "What matters is what the Bible says."</p> <p>"And what if I don't happen to believe the Bible?" asked Mike, his chin out this time.</p> <p>"Then maybe you don't belong here!" Matthew replied, also jumping to his feet, and taking a step in Mike's direction as he spoke.</p> <p>Sheila quickly jumped between the two men, extending her arms in both directions, as though separating boxing opponents. "Why don't we just sit down and . . ."</p> <p>But Luis spoke over top of her. "The Bible says</p>	<p>In Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven. . . ."</p> <p>"ENOUGH!"</p> <p>There was disagreement about exactly what happened at that instant. Some of those present could not even agree as to whether Rayford said anything at all.</p> <p>"It was more like an explosion," Luis said later, "except that it came out of his mouth."</p> <p>Whatever it was, it sent people literally flying across the room and into one another. Sister Mary, the only one still seated at the time, had tipped over backwards in her chair. Only Irene, who was standing behind Rayford when it happened, escaped the blast. Some of the others had bruises from it. A flash of light had accompanied the explosion. It had filled the room and momentarily blinded everyone present.</p> <p>Rayford himself was as shocked as anyone. But then he began to speak -- with an authority that he had never experienced before. It scared him, but it would have scared him even more not to have spoken, for he knew that what was coming out of his mouth at that moment was not his own words. They were the very words of God.</p> <p>And when he spoke, the entire room was silent. People listened as they had never listened to anyone before.</p> <p>"You are not here today because your doctrines are right. God has brought you here, and he has only done it because you are sincere. For two</p>		
104	SURVIVORS	9. THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS 105	106	SURVIVORS	9. THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS 107
<p>thousand years he has tolerated, and even engineered some of the divisions that have existed between you and other believers. Many of you have preached your half-baked doctrines, believing that you had the whole picture, when you only had a part of it. You have promoted personalities and organizations in your ignorance. And you imagined that people following other doctrines and leaders and organizations were somehow inferior to yourselves.</p> <p>"God left you ignorant. In most cases, to test your loyalty to him. He wanted to know if you would stay true to what you believed, even if it alienated you from your friends and family. And you are here today because you have each passed that test."</p> <p>Then Rayford raised his voice again. "But NOW . . . now, it's time to grow up!" Some of those present scooted back from where they were sitting on the floor. They were cnging in expectation of another explosion.</p> <p>But it never came. Rayford's voice softened instead.</p> <p>"Please believe me. Your single claim to righteousness is the grace of God. He has chosen you entirely because of your sincerity -- not because of your theology . . . or your lack of it." He looked at Mike as he said the last few words.</p> <p>Rayford picked up a stack of three-ring binders and proceeded to pass them out to the six people cowering in front of him. Over the past year, he had worked long hours to produce the material in those notebooks.</p>	<p>"There are articles in here on a wide range of topics," he said. "You are going to find some of them shocking. They will challenge some of your most sacred dogmas."</p> <p>"Brothers and sisters," he said with a pause and a hint of a smile, "it's time to move into a deeper understanding of truth than any of you have ever known before. It's time to prove your sincerity by listening to one another, and by setting aside your prejudices when you do."</p> <p>Rayford then tried to give the assembly a bigger picture of the significance of the moment.</p> <p>"A treaty is being signed in Jerusalem today," he said. "Before sundown tonight, construction will begin on a new Temple in Jerusalem. But a far greater agreement has been made in heaven. God is going to build his Temple, and, believe it or not, he's going to use you people here to do it. We have entered the final seven years of church history. The Great Tribulation is just three and a half years away, and it is our job to prepare the world for that time."</p> <p>Rayford paused again, to let the gravity of the situation sink in. Then he continued.</p> <p>"The death of Jesus marked the end of organized religion. God has, for two thousand years, been dealing with people personally and individually, trying to build character and faith that goes beyond organizational affiliation.</p> <p>"But now he's going to put all of the best qualities and bits of truth together to build his church, and not your own."</p>	<p>Mike, the humanist, was pleased to hear Rayford talking about things like individualism and character; but he was battling with the idea that this was all coming from a real God -- and a Christian one at that. Words like "church" and "Jesus" were hard for him to swallow. Mike was a bit of an anarchist too, and so talk of a new organization also unnerved him.</p> <p>In one way or another, each person in the room was facing a similar battle. They had been thrown together with people whom they had, for one reason or another, regarded as the enemy. But the presence of God there told them that Rayford was not just another guru trying to start another denomination.</p> <p>Rayford went on. "Right now, in another part of the world, there is another meeting going on like this one. There are six other people like yourselves. One is a Hindu, one a Muslim, and one a Jew." What Rayford was saying came not from his own human understanding, but rather, he was speaking, as he had been from the initial shout, as the mouth of God.</p> <p>"If you think you have differences to overcome, imagine how it must be for them. But God wants you people here and the six people he has brought together elsewhere to actually lead his endtime church through what lies ahead. You will become the 'judges' of this great movement. But you'll need to overcome your differences in order to do that."</p> <p>God's original plan for his people was for them to have twelve tribes, with tribal judges, to sort out problems as they arose. Not kings. Not dictators. But just tribal judges . . . people like Samuel, and</p>	<p>Gideon, and Deborah." He glanced at Sheila and Sister Mary Teresa as he mentioned Deborah.</p> <p>"Your job will be to help believers in your area of the world to know what is right and what is wrong. You won't be able to do that until you can overcome your differences, and until you can recognise the limitations of your own understanding."</p> <p>Rayford could feel the anointing fading, and he spoke more as an equal with those present now.</p> <p>"Brothers and sisters, I don't have all the answers. What I have prepared in these notebooks can act as a guide. But the bottom line is that you are going to have to learn how to hear God telling you things that you don't want to hear. You are going to have to learn to look past your own prejudices. We have a lot to learn in a very short period of time."</p> <p>"We're going to try talking once again, but I want each of you to work harder at listening this time, and to pray long and hard before you speak. You each have something to contribute, but it may not be as much as you think you have."</p> <p>The entire atmosphere in the room had been transformed. Everyone was subdued . . . humbled by the truth in what Rayford had said, and by the overwhelming presence of God in that room. Little by little they broached some of the issues that separated them, but they did so so timidly this time. When tensions arose, they would retreat into more prayer for more grace in their dealings with each other.</p> <p>And so the Western half of the Twelve Tribes, as the movement came to be called, was born.</p>		

Zion Ben-Jonah Writes

The Hebrew prophet, Daniel, gave a remarkable prediction about "God's people" 453 years before Jesus was born. (Daniel 9:24-26) He said that there were 490 years left for God's people, but that their Messiah would be "cut off" seven years before those 490 years were completed, in 30 A.D. (See "Armageddon for Beginners", chapter 6, "The Seventy Weeks", for a detailed discussion of that passage.)

The crucifixion of Jesus marked the end of organised religion as such. God has, for nearly two thousand years dealt with people individually and personally. All attempts at promoting "one true church" have ended in travesties of the "kingdom of heaven", which Jesus said was invisible. (Luke 17:20)

However, Daniel said that God's people would become a visible organisation once again as a result of an "agreement" made seven years before the "consummation" of all things. (Daniel 9:27) The prophecy is written in such a way as to indicate two parallel agreements. One is made between Christ and his Church, and the other is made between Antichrist and his Church.

The agreement will result in sacrifices once again being made in the (presently non-existent) Temple in Jerusalem... at least for the first three and a half years of that agreement. And it will also result in the coming together of twelve "tribes" of Christian believers.

The third alternative was for people who (usually because of their great wealth) feared someone might kill and skin them, in an attempt to locate their transponder. Authorities assured the public that this would be virtually impossible, because the implants were extremely difficult to retrieve after they had been injected, and because a scanner would recognise anyone with two implants and it would refuse to process them.

Nevertheless, if people insisted on not accepting the implant, then they had the option of having a visible tattoo on their hand to signify that they had been officially "Declared and Certified Legally Exempt from Verification Implant", which was abbreviated DCLXVI, or 666 in Roman numerals!

People choosing the tattoo were allowed to manually punch their pin number into scanning machines, as it had been done in the old days before the Mark.

The only other exception was Dangchao himself, who needed only to use his *name* as identification. He had neither a tattoo nor an implant.

Chloe and Mary Teresa found that, even with Europe's widespread use of the Mark, new members had each failed to accept the implant or the tattoo for one reason or another. For some it seemed merely coincidental, because they knew nothing about the spiritual significance of what had been happening in the banking world. These amazing coincidences deepened the movement's conviction that God had been intervening in each

13. The Mark

Many of the European disciples who joined Mary Teresa's tribe (which also included North Africa), had considerable wealth, which could be shared, not only with the poorer members in Africa, but also with tribes in other parts of the Third World. But getting funds from one place to another was not easy.

Europe led the world in adopting "the Mark", a microchip implant that was gaining in popularity throughout the world, because of its efficiency. The Twelve Tribes, like the Jesans before them, were opposed to the use of credit cards, smartcards, and especially to using the Mark. This made commercial transactions difficult for all of the tribes, but especially for European members.

The position taken by the Twelve Tribes came from a prophecy and a curse which appear in the 13th and 14th chapters of The Revelation:

"He (the Antichrist) causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a Mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, so that no one might buy or sell, save he that had the Mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name." (Revelation 13:15-16)

"If anyone worship the Beast and his image, and receive his Mark in their forehead, or in their hand, they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and they shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels,

and in the presence of the Lamb. The smoke of their torment ascends up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whoever receives the Mark of his name." (Revelation 14:9-11)

Without the Mark, it was difficult for Chloe or Sister Mary, or anyone in their tribe to make the simplest purchases. Rayford and Chaim did not teach that credit cards or smart cards were necessarily wrong, but they taught that a true believer would want to err on the side of being too cautious, rather than making excuses to move closer and closer to taking the Mark. The hard part was that so much business had to be done outside the generally accepted channels. Sister Mary became quite adept at dealing through the Black Market, although it meant paying very high prices.

Although some evangelical Christians had, in the past, promised to oppose the Mark when it came in, as soon as it became clear that it was going to cost them personally, they adopted other arguments to justify using it, as they had done previously with credit cards and smart cards. The most common argument was to say that a loving God would never punish anyone for ever and ever, especially not for doing something so innocent as buying and selling.

One line of reasoning said that Christians could take the Mark without necessarily worshipping the devil, and as long as they did not "sell their soul" to the devil, the grace of God would compensate

permission to glean leftover fruit from previously harvested fields. The barrier holding us back is not that we are doing anything immoral. It's really just a simple case of pride."

In England, Rayford had gone over the study with his top leaders, and then finished it up with a group outing to some of the Jesans' favourite supermarket bins in the West London area. Every leader was expected to take a turn at climbing into a bin and foraging for food or other useful items. When it came Irene's turn, she crept hesitantly off toward the back of an Aldi supermarket, while Rayford stood guard in the van just around the corner from her.

Irene, who had somehow escaped participating in such an activity while she and Rayford had operated from the flat in Guildford, was apprehensive. She first squeezed behind the big industrial bin, in order to get a foothold on the fence next to it, before climbing in.

But then, just as she was about to lift herself up, she saw movement inside the bin itself, and she froze. There in front of her was a withered old woman dressed in several layers of rags, whose hair was unkempt, and her face black with dirt. The two women stared at each other in shock.

But it was the filthy, bedraggled bag lady who spoke first.

"Irene!" she shouted in amazement, and then she recoiled almost immediately, as though from shame.

for their treachery. In its purest form the argument stated that even if they *did* worship the Antichrist or sell their soul to the devil, providing they had said a magical prayer "asking Jesus" into their hearts" before selling out, God would be forced to forgive them. The teaching had been used to justify greed, pride, lust, dishonesty, self-righteousness, and every other sin you could think of for many decades before the Mark came in, so it was only natural that it should be extended to take in that form of disobedience as well.

The Mark took a number of different forms. By far, the most popular was the tiny implant, just under the skin on the back of the right hand. Technology had succeeded in making a little biochip (or passive transponder) that was so small that it was almost microscopic. It contained a universal pin number which was unique for each bearer. With the Mark in place, a person's right hand could be waved in front of a scanner using low frequency radio waves to verify the number before funds were added to or subtracted from that person's bank account. This would be done each time they wanted to buy or sell something.

An alternative Mark was available for amputees or others who could not use their right hand for one reason or another. These people could have the microchip implanted under the skin of their forehead. They could then just put their head in front of the scanner to authorise sales and purchases.

Irene was speechless. How did this strange, almost frightening woman know her name? And then she saw something in the woman's eyes which she recognised.

"Elaire? Is that you? *Elaire!*"

Irene leaned far into the bin to hug the poor woman, who had begun to cry, both from fear and from relief.

By the time Rayford came looking to see what was taking so long, Elaïne had told most of her story. What had been missed was told and re-told back at the flat when the bin excursion had ended.

Elaïne Billings had been able to use Tom and Betty's car and money to get fuel, and to drive herself and her husband on to Montana, from where they had left Irene in North Dakota; but Vernon had died from the effects of radiation, only a week after they had arrived.

Those pilgrims who had reached Montana had quickly broken into factions when it became clear that there was no Messiah to be found. A couple of deluded souls had tried to pass themselves off as Jesus, while others insisted that they only needed to give God more time, and their dreams would come true. On the whole, it was a sorry, disillusioned lot of pilgrims. Most, like Elaïne, were torn between losing their faith altogether and struggling to rebuild it on the basis of different criteria. Many of them died there in Montana before rescue teams came by helicopter to take them out of the country several weeks later.

It may have been good luck or just poor management that had brought Elaine to England. She had come on the understanding that she had a cousin there who would take responsibility for her. But in the confusion of the time, the authorities (many of whom were volunteers) had done little to check out the background to her claim. When she arrived, Elaine discovered that her cousin, a penniless recluse, had died of a heart attack more than a year previously. She was all alone in a country whose charity was already stretched to near breaking point.

Elaine had made no effort to link up with or seek aid from any church or charity, choosing rather to work out her own salvation on the streets. Despite her shocking appearance and confused mental state, Elaine possessed a strength of character that had not only carried her through the past year and a half but had been partly borne out of the circumstances in which she had found herself.

Elaine quickly regained what sanity she had lost through her ordeal. Because they had both been through such similar spiritual pilgrimages, she and Irene became closer than any two sisters. Irene saw her new companion as a blessing from God in replacement for the son and daughter that she had farewelled a few months earlier. Elaine was warmly accepted into the Tribe of Joseph as part of the Guildford administrative team.

But back to Chloe's lessons on survival without the Mark. "Stealing" was a pastime that Elaine had become expert at, after a year and a half on the streets. She had a host of helpful tips about living out of bins and surviving on other throwouts. But she was also good at bartering.

She had learned to pick up little treasures that she found, and then later trade them with the right people for food, clothing, and sometimes even a night's shelter (although she relied mostly on begging to get shelter).

Bartering was a handy way to circumvent the Mark, especially when members of the Twelve Tribes were forsaking possessions that they had no need for in their new lifestyle. In later years they would most often do this to get clothing and food. If they were prepared to take a big loss, there was always someone prepared to give them what they needed in a top-sided swap.

Unfortunately, bartering did not work with large purchases like travel tickets and motor vehicles, because of the paperwork associated with it. Consequently, the Twelve Tribes were told by their spokesmen to brace for a time when they would have to live *without* such luxuries.

Technically, the believers had until three and a half years after the Temple agreement had been signed before they would be forced totally outside of the economic system; but in practice, the test had already begun, especially for those living in the affluent West.

The Jesans, and a few others like Elaine, who had been living outside the system prior to the agreement, were the recognised experts on how to survive in an alien world. They had benefited greatly from having rejected credit cards and smart cards -- both forerunners of the Mark.

"We do not need any more information about the Mark than what is found in the gospels," wrote Chaim Rosenberg. In Australia "The Mark is never mentioned there," he went on. "But there, in the teachings of Jesus, we are told to be like the flowers and to be like the birds, who do not have jobs, do not plant fields, and do not weave cloth. God feeds them, and he will feed us if we will put his work first. If only we had taken that more seriously decades ago, we would be so much more prepared for what is about to happen now."

Chaim taught that most of the suffering that would take place amongst believers during the approaching Great Tribulation would be the result of disobedience to the teachings of Jesus now.

"The Antichrist will not have to hunt us down," he said. "Those with shallow faith are already lining up to receive his Mark. Others, who are brave enough to refuse the Mark, will starve or freeze to death without any action on the part of the Antichrist himself. It will happen because they never learned how to hear from God and how to obey him from day to day. That's what we are learning now. But those who run away from such discipline now will pay dearly for it in the next few years."

Zion Ben-Jonah Writes:

The Mark of the Beast is so close to reality, that debates amongst those who say it is not fulfilment of Rev. 13:15-17, deal only with technicalities. No doubt there will be changes in implant and scanner technology over the next few years, but not even the skeptics would deny that the business world is committed to eventually using a form of marketing technology that was predicted in the Bible nearly 2,000 years ago. And the prophecy says that the technology comes from the Antichrist. Either you act on that information or you lose God and the Bible out.

Considering the dire warning that the prophecy gives about accepting the Mark, one would have to be virtually dead spiritually to continue with the materialistic lifestyle that so much of the world (including almost all churchgoers) continues to pursue and to take for granted today.

At the moment, for most of the West, it is not as though they would have to risk death in order to just "play it safe" and live as the early Christians did. There is abundant wealth in our society, and there are a host of safety nets to help anyone who might wish to experiment with a lifestyle which is more concerned with spiritual things than it is with getting a new wardrobe or a bigger car. But still they choose to reject the way of Jesus.

With or without the Mark, the world (again, including the churches) continues to put its faith in, and to spend its life working for, the tokens that they wrongly believe will buy them happiness.

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God's No Fool

Imagine yourself as God. You've made the universe from nothing, and your special creation is people. They can feel joy and sorrow, confidence and fear, love and hate. Earth, and the life people experience on it are just the start of life as you know it. You have the capacity to give them that life... to make them live forever, without sickness or sorrow. You can fill them so full of happiness that their present bodies could not contain it all. You can give them super-powers like yourself.

But first you want to know that they appreciate who you are and what you've done for them.

Some of these humans have formed clubs, where they talk about you. They rave about how great you are and how much they love you. But it's clear from their lives that they don't mean a word of it. Each club is different, but they all make their own rules about how to tell true worshippers from false ones - stupid rules that your worst enemy could follow!

So how are you going to decide who to give your blessings to? It's really not hard at all. You just find what people love most, and you ask them to trade it for all that you have... no, for your *promise* that you'll give them all that you have: eternal life, eternal joy, eternal adventure. If they have faith to do that, you've found true believers.

But how do you convince them that this set of rules is really coming from you? Well, you go down there yourself, in a human body, and tell them the rules, practice them yourself, and demonstrate in as many ways as necessary that you really are God, including coming back to life after being killed.

You do such a convincing job of it that they end up measuring all time from when you were born on their planet. Each year the whole world celebrates your appearance on their planet. They build huge cathedrals and multi-national organisations to honour the God who became a human.

But still they refuse to follow the rules that you came to give them. Still they cling to their trivial possessions, their jobs, their families, their lives. And they do this while claiming to be entitled to the eternal life you promised to those who showed their faith in you by meeting your specifications.

So what do you do? Do you throw out the rules, let people call the shots, and bow to their selfish decrees? Or do you stick to the rules and demand that they live by faith in you alone if they want to share in all that you have?

Only a fool would be conned into backing down to these liars and cheats, and you're no fool, are you?

But of course you aren't really God; and when you think about it, if you're not getting serious about obeying the rules he has given, then maybe you are the fool!



THE SECOND WAVE OF CONVERTS ALSO SOLD THEIR HOMES AND CONTRIBUTED ALL OF THEIR POSSESSIONS TO BE USED FOR THE GOOD OF ALL.

THEIR LEADERS MADE SURE THAT EVERYTHING WAS SHARED EQUALLY.

